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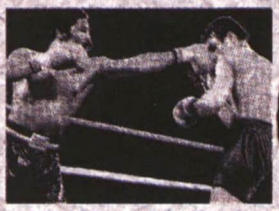

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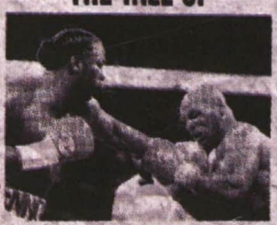

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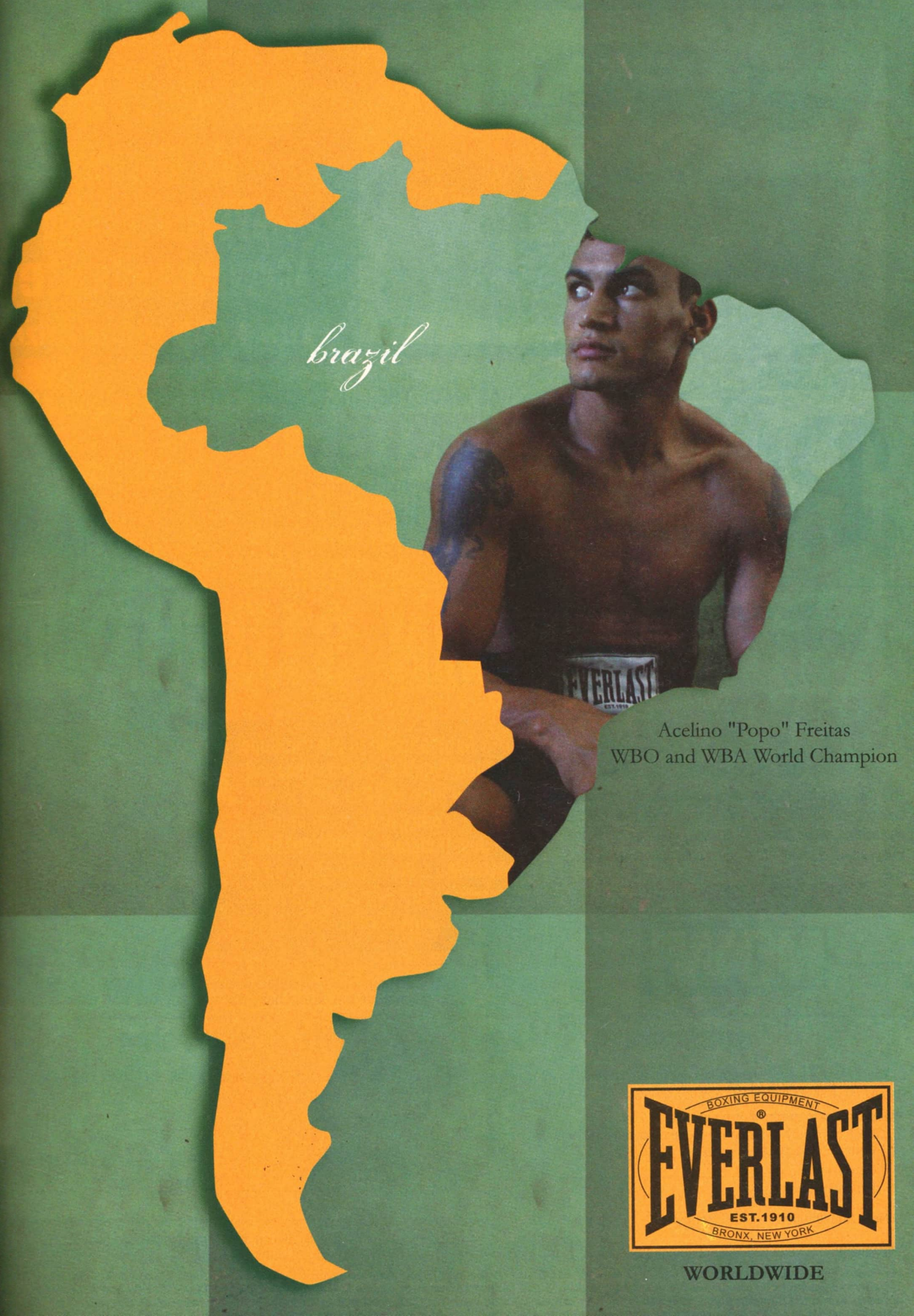

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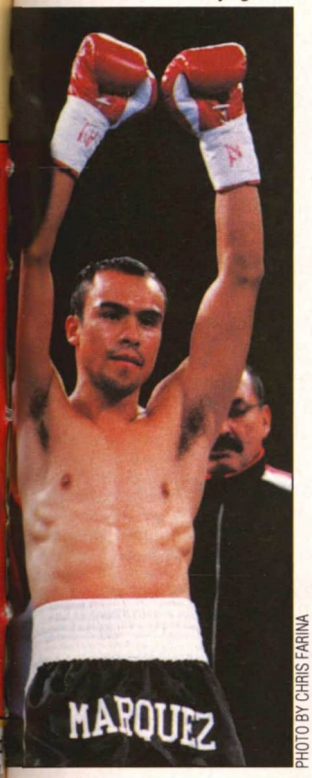

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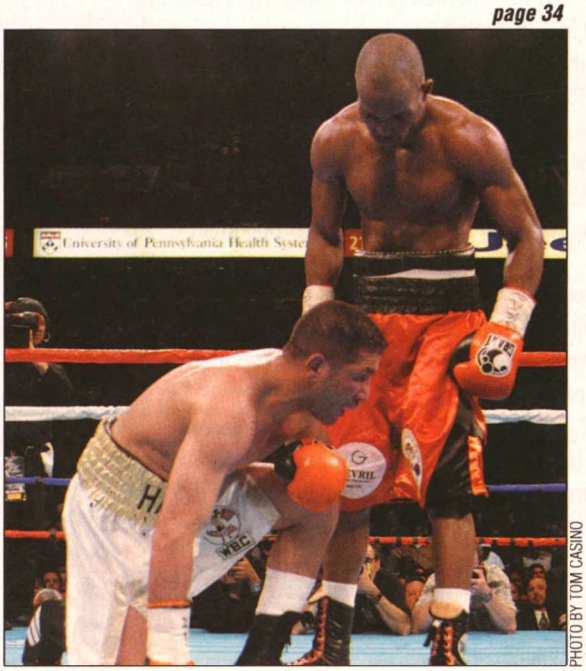

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RINGSIDE

If you wonder why boxing's legitimate champions don't tell the alphabet gangs to go to hell, you're not alone. Even before THE RING instituted its new championship policy a little more than a year ago, they had the power to do so. And now there's a straightforward alternative to the alphabet skullduggery, it makes even more sense to totally disregard these parasitic organizations.

But by and large, even fighters with tremendous power within the industry have been reluctant to turn their backs on the very organizations that have screwed them in the past. And if the fighters with the most juice are still knee deep in alphabet soup, it's little wonder than fighters with less influence are swimming in it.

It doesn't stop with the fighters. Promoters, managers, and television networks are just as guilty of helping perpetuate the very problems they cry loudest about when things don't go to their liking.

So why is this happening? Why are fighters such as Lennox Lewis, Roy Jones, and Oscar De La Hoya, fighters who don't need a bogus belt around their waist to earn millions, still doing business with these bandits? Why do promoters and managers moan and groan about the alphabet organizations one minute, and then embrace them the next? The same goes for TV networks, where the on-air talent will rip the alphabet gangs, then cut to a commercial advertising an upcoming alphabet title fight. What is at the root of these apparent contradictions?

The answer is simple: Virtually everybody involved is looking after their own self-interest by playing both ends against the middle. Instead of looking at the big picture, and a trying to conduct themselves with an eye toward the long-range health of the sport, they are looking out for number one, even if that means perpetuating a corrupt system that has been the major cause of boxing's ills.

Boxing won't improve without sacrifice, and while it's unrealistic to expect those on the lower rungs of the sport's rickety financial ladder to risk their livelihoods, boxing's big guns are certainly in position to take the lead.

It's very simple, really. All it would take is one major player, say, Lewis, to stand up and tell the alphabet groups to get lost. After all, Lewis, along with Mike Tyson, created the biggest money-spinner in boxing history, and not one less penny would have been generated if the match had taken place without alphabet sanction.

Being a real champion means more than winning in the ring, and boxing is in dire need of a champion with the integrity and foresight to see beyond his own interests.

***

I was recently contacted by Frankie Wagner, Aaron Pryor's fiancée, who felt that the update on Aaron that was published in Volume One of the 2003 THE RING ANNUAL didn't adequately represent his current circumstances. Therefore, I'd like to take this opportunity to set the record straight.

First of all, according to Ms. Wagner, Pryor is no longer living in the Cincinnati projects, and is currently residing in suburban Mt. Airy. She also assures us that he's been clean of cocaine for 10 years now—not that we said he hadn't—and has also been a deacon at New Friendship Baptist Church for the past eight years.

"His overall life is amazingly better than it has ever been," said Wagner, "and according to Aaron, he wouldn't trade the life he has today for his championship years."

That's great. Aaron has always been a personal favorite and I'm happy to learn that he's doing so well. For those who would like more details, click on to his Web site: www.hawktime.com.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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☐ Sep/96	☐ Mar/98	☐ May/99	☐ May/00	☐ May/01	☐ Jul/02	☐ Jun/03
☐ Nov/96	☐ Apr/98	☐ Jun/99	☐ Jun/00	☐ Jun/01	☐ Aug/02	☐ Jul/03
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ROUND ONE

WHAT NOW FOR WAYNE?

There are times when Wayne McCullough likes to sit alone on the edge of the ring in the garage of his Las Vegas home and quietly contemplate. He is surrounded by fight posters and silence. Only the wind outside speaks.

Such a quiet moment awaited "The Pocket Rocket" upon his return to Vegas in early-April following his defeat to Scott Harrison *(see page 46)*. For three days he was hospitalized in the Southern General in Govan, on the outskirts of Glasgow, Scotland, as he recovered from the effects of dehydration suffered in the grueling 12-round bout. He was treated well and loved the tea the nurses brought frequently to his private room, but this was the first time in his 32-year-old life that he had been hospitalized overnight, and it was like a life sentence.

The former WBC bantamweight titleholder received a clean bill of health before being discharged, which surely gladdened the hearts of his many fans. Popular not only because of his relentless fighting style but also because of his friendly nature and his devotion to his wife, Cheryl, and daughter, Wynona, McCullough is an extreme example of the warrior spirit that awes those of us who are drawn to ringside. He refers to himself sometimes as "a crazy Irishman," but Martin O'Neill, the manager of Scottish football champions Celtic, summed up his quality when he visited him in the hospital.

"I just wanted to tell you what a brave so-and-so you are," O'Neill told him. "It's not your chin. Any man's chin can be broken. It's courage, resolve. You have that. I just wanted to tell you that."

Three years ago, THE RING recognized McCullough's chin as the best in boxing, and he verified this once more during his challenge of Harrison. In 30 professional bouts and 319 as an amateur, the '92 Olympic silver medalist has never been knocked off his feet, never mind stopped, and he was characteristically defiant after the fourth defeat of his career.

"This is the first time since I became a professional fighter that I'm at least not out running, that I'm not back in the gym. It's my first real break in 10 years," said McCullough, who successfully challenged the British Boxing Board of Control when they declared that one more punch could kill him after a cyst was discovered in his skull in an October 2000 MRI scan. "I'm going to enjoy this break, take it easy for a while, and then look at what I might do.

"I'm a fighter. I'll always be a fighter. People will tell me what they think I should do, but I'm the one who knows. You have family and friends who love you, but you know that when you're in that ring you are on your own."

He should know as well, however, when he sits on the side of his ring, that the thoughts of many will be with him.

—Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

McCullough faces an uncertain future after facing Harrison

THE JUDAH-CORLEY BRAWL, UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Junior welterweight contenders DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley and Zab Judah have talked about one day squaring off, but they didn't exactly expect the Philadelphia Spectrum's Bullies Restaurant to be the venue of their big fight. Judah and Corley engaged in a minor scuffle at the Bernard Hopkins-Morrade Hakkar postfight press conference in late-March, highlighted by Judah throwing a left hand that landed on Corley's face.

A small-scale brawl quickly ensued, complete with chairs, sunglasses, and cell phones flying through the air. The two fighters were quickly separated and order was restored, with well-known trainer Aaron Snowell, Corley's manager Kirk Cashwell, and members of the media (including yours truly) stepping in to prevent the situation from escalating even further.

It started innocently enough, just a simple greeting between two potential rivals. I was standing there talking to Judah and his brothers when Corley came by, and I said to Judah, "Hey, you know who this guy is," gesturing toward Corley. Chop Chop smiled at first and engaged in what appeared to be just harmless trash talk, telling Judah, "You're afraid of me." Judah fired a comment back, and that seemed to be the end of it, as Judah and his brothers peeled off.

But Judah soon had something to say to Cashwell, and Corley told his manager, "Just get the contract signed, I'll beat his ass in the ring."

"That's when Judah punched me in the face," Corley said. "He can't punch. He hit me in the face, and you don't hit someone in the face, then run back behind your brothers. I want to fight him now. Zab needs to call Don King (Corley's promoter and possibly Judah's promoter soon) and sign this thing. I hope Jay Nady doesn't ref this fight, because the ref won't save him."

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

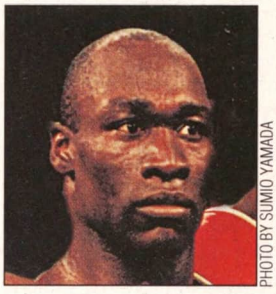


PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Will Judah (above) and Corley settle their dispute in the ring?

After the melee was broken up, Cashwell took Corley outside to cool off, then went back into the restaurant to look for Chop Chop's missing cell phone. That's when Part II of Corley-Judah almost happened. Corley came back inside to confront Judah, saying that if Zab wanted to fight, he'd be more than happy to do it one-on-one outside, without Judah's brothers. Once outside the arena, both fighters talked and cursed at one another, but neither fighter got close enough to throw any punches.

Hopefully, the next time they do exchange punches, it will be in a more appropriate setting, and both fighters will get paid for it.

—Joe Santoliquito

FAN MAN, 1963-2002

A decade ago, James Miller's search for 15 minutes of fame caused a 21-minute delay in a heavyweight championship fight, but his days of flying into the public spotlight are now officially over. The "Fan Man" who landed on the ring apron during the seventh round of the Evander Holyfield-Riddick Bowe rematch in Las Vegas on November 6, 1993, committed suicide in Valdez, Alaska, last September. His body was discovered six months later.

Miller, 39, was suffering from constant chest pains, deep in debt with medical bills, and, according to those close to him, certain that he would be unable to provide for the baby his girlfriend was pregnant with at the time. Miller had been experiencing the chest pain for two years, and double bypass surgery failed to alleviate the discomfort. So sometime in September (he was officially declared missing on September 22, and the search abandoned on October 13), Miller, an outdoors enthusiast, went for a hike in a remote spot and hung himself from a tree with a nylon strap. Hunters found his body on March 9.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Miller makes his most famous landing

For his most infamous stunt, Miller served 10 days in prison for trespassing and was fined $4,000 by the Federal Aviation Administration, but it didn't stop him from paragliding into places he wasn't welcome. A year after his Holyfield-Bowe interruption, Miller landed on the roof of Buckingham Palace, an act that got him fined, jailed, and banned forever from England.

Miller worked with computers professionally and continued to paraglide recreationally until his health turned ill. Though considered more a menace to society than anything else, Miller's life was not insignificant. He may very well have changed heavyweight history by altering the flow of a fight Holyfield would go on to win by a single point. Fan Man didn't have many fans besides the one on his back, but he won't be forgotten.

—Eric Raskin

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
03/15/03	Michael Simms D 10 Felix Cora	Show	c	C+	A	B+
Two young, skilled cruiserweights in an even, exciting fight; has the whole world gone topsy-turvy?						
03/15/03	**Acelino Freitas KO 4 Juan Carlos Ramirez**	**Show**	**WBA jl**	**A**	**C-**	**C+**
How the hell is Freitas a unified champion?						
03/15/03	Kirk Johnson KO 4 Lou Savarese	FOX SN	h	B-	C-	C
Don't get too excited, Kirk; we haven't forgotten the Ruiz fight						
03/21/03	Demetrius Hopkins W 10 Andre Eason	ESPN2	jw	C	B+	C
Hopkins is 12-0 and hasn't fired anyone yet; are we sure he's related to Bernard?						
03/21/03	Michael Stewart KO 7 Chucky T	ESPN2	jw	C+	B	C+
Blair Talmadge, Arthur Jr. called; he said you could have stopped it sooner						
03/21/03	Alex Arthur KO 6 Patrick Malinga	Show	jl	C-	C+	C+
Can you say Robin Reid?						
03/21/03	Scott Harrison W 12 Wayne McCullough	Show	f	B+	A	C-
How long do you think it was before McCullough started regretting never learning how to duck?						
03/21/03	Julio Diaz KO 7 Ernesto Zepeda	PPV	l	B	B	B+
What was with all that blood? Ringsiders must have felt like they were at a Gallagher concert						
03/21/03	**Miguel Barrera KO 3 Roberto Leyva**	**PPV**	**IBF s**	**A**	**A**	**C+**
Leyva decides early that if it's all the same to us, he'd just as soon get out of this one with most of his teeth still in his head						
03/21/03	Jesus Chavez KO 6 Carlos Gerena	PPV	jl	A	B+	C+
It's always fun watching when a guy who clowns around too much get his ass handed to him						
03/28/03	Terrence Cauthen W 12 Roberto Ortega	ESPN2	jw	C+	C+	D+
We're not saying Cauthen's boring, but we heard Chris Byrd fell asleep at ringside						
03/28/03	Teddy Reid KO 7 Pat Coleman	ESPN2	w	C+	B+	B-
This was interesting for the first couple of rounds; Reid enjoys more than most guys giving someone a beating						
03/29/03	Hasim Rahman D 12 David Tua	HBO	h	A	B+	B
Will the real Hasim Rahman please stand up?						
03/29/03	**Bernard Hopkins KO 8 Morrade Hakkar**	**HBO**	**World m**	**A**	**F**	**C-**
Who's giving Hopkins career advice? David Caruso?						
03/31/03	Jermain Taylor KO 5 Marcos Primera	PPV	m	B-	B+	B-
Taylor's best outing as a pro; maybe DiBella's got something here						
03/31/03	Angel Manfedy KO 7 Moises Pedroza	PPV	l	C+	C	B
How can anyone say today's champs are bums when a good fighter like Manfredy can't win a title?						
03/31/03	**Rosendo Alvarez W 12 Beibis Mendoza**	**PPV**	**World jfl**	**A**	**B+**	**B-**
Was this really necesssary? It wasn't like Beibis won the first fight by kayo; Alvarez was DQ'd						
04/04/03	Glencoffe Johnson D 10 Daniel Judah	ESPN2	lh	C+	B+	C+
Note to Johnson: when we can see your brain through your scalp, it's time to stop either fighting or shaving your head						
04/04/03	Monte Barrett W 10 Robert Wiggins	ESPN2	h	C	C	D+
It's tempting to bash Barrett for winning so ugly, but apparently Wiggins does that to guys						
04/05/03	Junior Witter KO 4 Jurgeon Haeck	Show	jw	C	D	D
So Witter now is Naseem Hamed without the big ears or the big punch; how exciting						
04/05/03	Ricky Hatton W 12 Vince Phillips	Show	jw	B+	B	C
Phillips took enough punches for five fights; whether or not he can still fight, he should get out now						

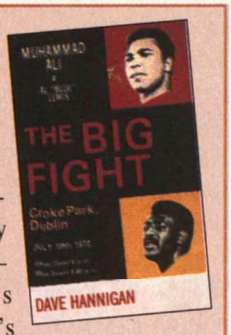
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



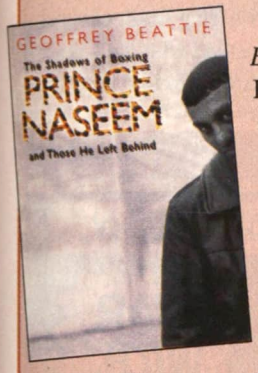
Just when you thought it impossible that yet another Muhammad Ali title could find its way to bookstore shelves, along comes *The Big Fight* (Random House U.K., 176 pages, paperback, $16.95), a delightful little read about Ali's 1972 stoppage of fringe contender Al "Blue" Lewis.

On the surface it would appear that a study covering a singular fight in Ali's long career—particularly one as seemingly insignificant as this rather pedestrian 11th-round kayo win—would be dubious material for an entire book. Indeed, Ali's biggest fights have been detailed before; the late Mark Kram Sr.'s exquisite *Ghosts Of Manila* covered the Frazier trilogy and then some, and Norman Mailer's *The Fight,* told in typical Mailer bombast, celebrated Ali's triumph over George Foreman in Zaire.

So what's so interesting about Ali-Lewis? It took place in Dublin, Ireland, at the height of Catholic-Protestant tensions. It also featured the most popular and beloved athlete in the world, who was an African-American Muslim, performing in perhaps the most Caucasian country on the planet, and in some sense it provided context for Ali's revelation that his maternal great grandfather emigrated from the very same country a hundred years earlier.

Written skillfully and with obvious affection by Dave Hannigan, *The Big Fight* delights with the kind of back stories indigenous to the fight game, but with a heavy Irish tinge. Generous biographies are afforded Lewis, legendary publicist Harold Conrad, Irish folk hero Butty Sugrue, and other assorted characters important to the event's long birth. The work's strongest quality is its ability through anecdote and prose to transport the reader right back to that time and to experience Ali again in a way that is much more convincing than was, for example, Will Smith's portrayal in the film *Ali*. *The Big Fight* is a thoroughly enjoyable read. If you're an Ali junkie, make room for it on your shelf.

—William Dettloff



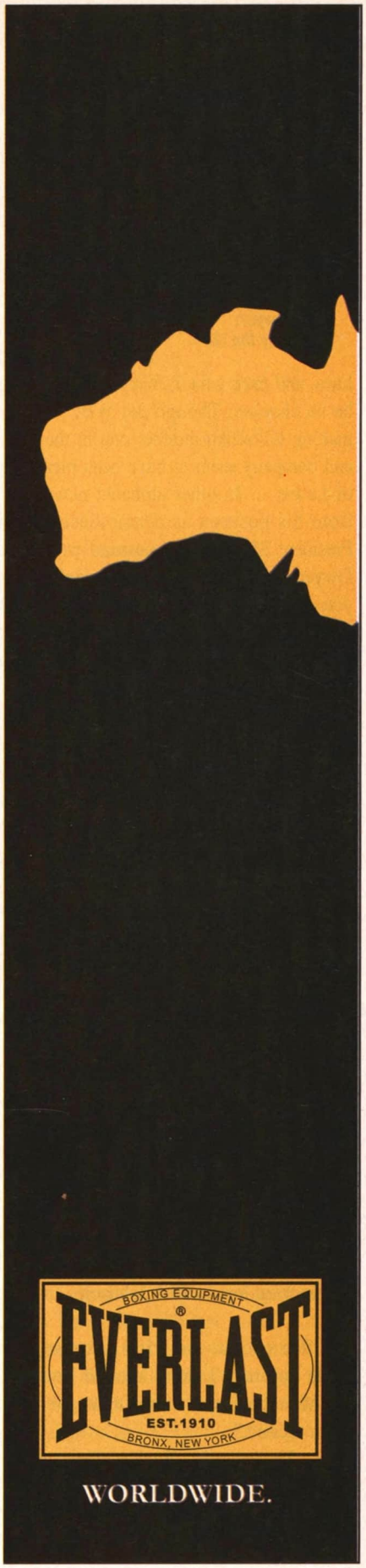
The Shadows Of Boxing: Prince Naseem And Those He Left Behind (Orion Books, 210 pages, hardback, $29.95) is Geoffrey Beattie's sequel to his first book about Hamed, the critically acclaimed *On The Ropes*, which concluded with Naz' 1995 victory over Steve Robinson. *Shadows* picks up the story in 2001, shortly after Hamed's defeat at the hands of Marco Antonio Barrera.

Beattie, a professor of psychology at Manchester University and a columnist for the Manchester *Guardian*, brings a unique perspective to boxing journalism, looking at things more like a social scientist than a sportswriter. There is as much, if not more, about the people who populate the fringes of the fight scene (ex-pugs, punters, nightclub bouncers) as there is about Hamed in *Shadows*, but for those whose interests go beyond the confines of the ring, it's fascinating stuff.

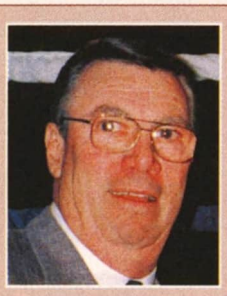
The climax of the book is a lengthy interview with Hamed and his brother/manager Riath in which they tell their side of the infamous split between Naz and his trainer/mentor Brendan Ingle. And even though the brothers come off as self-serving and shallow, you can understand why Naseem felt the need to escape Ingle's overbearing presence.

Beattie is an insightful writer, and even though *Shadows* is not your typical boxing book, it is a fascinating read and should please fans who care to look outside the ropes to better understand the men who toil between them.

—Nigel Collins

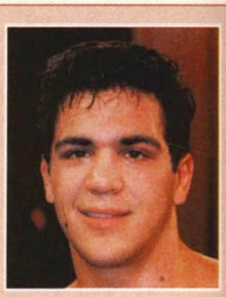


OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Dwyer: Fired by the IBF

Though he's been inactive as the heavyweight king, **Lennox Lewis** is staying busy in his efforts to remain king of the courtroom. The champ filed against the WBC and **Vitali Klitschko** in late-March, contending that the Mexico-based alphabet group brokered a deal to force Lewis to defend against the elder Klitschko brother. So far, the WBC hasn't forced Lewis to do anything; they've been setting and re-setting deadlines, and even gave Lewis clearance to fight **Mike Tyson** first if he so chooses. Though the WBC deserves heavy criticism for making Klitschko number one in the first place, **Jose Sulaiman** and company seem to have been plenty lenient in their treatment of Lewis ... In other alphabet news, the IBF fired **Joe Dwyer** from his position as championship chairman in March. IBF President **Marian Muhammad** wrote in a letter of dismissal to Dwyer, "I have found it increasingly more difficult to work with you over the past year or so. I lack confidence in your ability to effectively perform the duties of the IBF championship chairman." ESPN's **Max Kellerman** later cracked that Muhammad found it difficult to work with Dwyer because he was trying to enforce rules that would make fighters *earn* their rankings ... Junior middleweight contender **Daniel Santos** was jailed briefly in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in late-March after allegedly beating his wife, **Miriam L. Reyes**, to the point of unconsciousness. It was reported that Santos saw his wife at a San Juan bar in the wee hours of the morning accompanied by another, approached her, and began punching her in the head and body. No word as of press time on what the penalty might be for Santos if convicted ... Undefeated heavyweight **Joe Mesi** and promoter **Sugar Ray Leonard** Boxing reached a confidential settlement in late-March to dissolve their contract, which SRLB had claimed had one fight remaining. Mesi got back into action immediately, fighting the next day under promoter **Tony Holden** ... Boxing's top two Oscars are joining forces, as a deal between **Oscar De La Hoya's** Golden Boy Promotions and veteran Mexican manager **Don Rafael Mendoza** has brought WBC super bantam titlist **Oscar Larios** into De La Hoya's stable. The "strategic relationship" between GBP and Mendoza, as the press release called it, was announced in early-April ... **Shane Mosley** ended his business relationship with marketing agents IMG in early-April. It is believed that Mosley felt the fact that IMG's **Barry Frank** is good friends with promoter **Bob Arum** hurt Sugar Shane in negotiations for Mosley's rematch with De La Hoya. The negotiations were eventually finalized without Frank's involvement ... Former heavyweight champ **Joe Frazier's** lawsuit against the Oneida Indian Nation over the unauthorized use of his image in a fight promotion was dismissed in late-March, on the grounds that the Indian tribe was immune from the suit because of its sovereign status. Frazier was seeking a total of $16-million for the "extreme emotional damage" he suffered from having his photographs used on fight posters, programs, etc., for the **Laila Ali-Jacqui Frazier-Lyde** fight in 2001. Smokin' Joe intends to appeal the decision ... No deaths to report in the world of boxing this month, thankfully, but there is one breaking story related to the death of a boxer. Western Indemnity Insurance was ordered by a Jackson County, Missouri, judge to pay a $1-million settlement reached by ringside doctor **Michael Poppa** in the September 1999 ring death of super middleweight **Randie Carver**. Poppa had settled with the Carver family two years ago, but Western Indemnity had refused to pay.



Mesi: Settles with Sugar Ray

THE PUNCHLINES

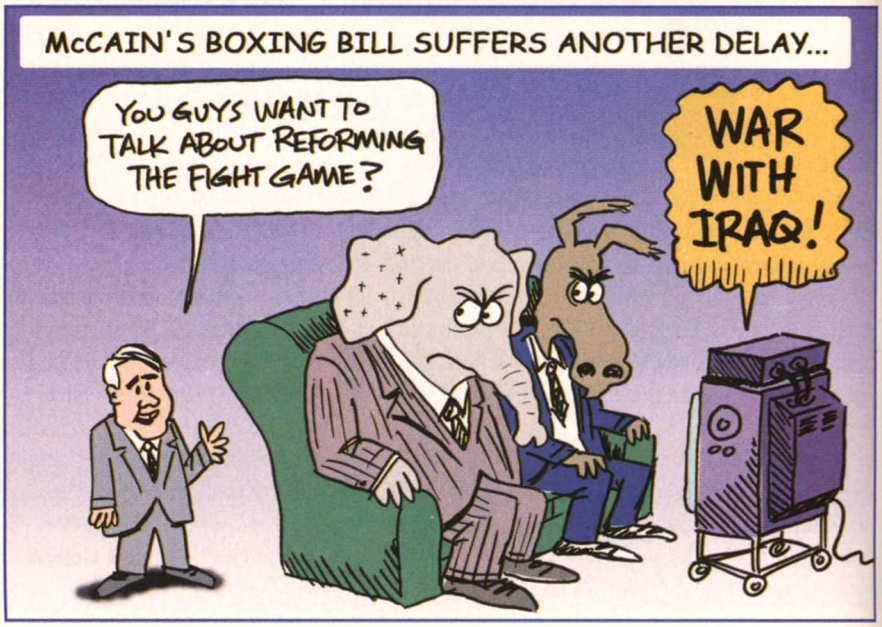
"Basketball or bowling are sports you can come back from, but this is a blood sport. You can't take back brain cells."

—Heavyweight Lou Savarese, announcing his retirement following a knockout loss to Kirk Johnson

"He caught me with a corking right uppercut. I didn't know if I was in Manchester or Las Vegas for a split second."

—Victorious Ricky Hatton, reflecting on a perilous moment during his 12-round decision over Vince Phillips

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES**
   Heavyweight/Light Heavyweight
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
5. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
6. **ERIK MORALES**
   Featherweight
7. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Lightweight
8. **RICARDO MAYORGA**
   Welterweight
9. **LENNOX LEWIS**
   Heavyweight
10. **VERNON FORREST**
    Welterweight

(For period ended April 8, 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: David Tua slips from second to fifth following his draw with Hasim Rahman, who stays at number six. Tua's demotion pushes up Corrie Sanders (third last issue), Roy Jones (fourth last issue), and Evander Holyfield (fifth last issue) one spot each.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Markus Beyer (10th last issue) regained the WBC belt with a close, controversial decision over Eric Lucas (fourth last issue), which elevates Beyer to the fourth position. Lucas slips one spot to fifth. The reshuffling drops Byron Mitchell (fifth last issue) to sixth, Charles Brewer (sixth last issue) to seventh, and Mads Larsen (seventh last issue) to eighth.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Ricky Hatton makes his debut at number 10 following his one-sided victory over Vince Phillips. Fading Jesse James Leija (ninth last issue) departs to make room for Hatton. Diobelys Hurtado (10th last issue) moves to ninth.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Scott Harrison (eighth last issue) jumps to fifth on the strength of his dominant win over Wayne McCullough. Harrison's advancement forces Manuel Medina (fifth last issue), Johnny Tapia (sixth last issue), and Frankie Toledo (seventh last issue) down one rung each.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Jose Luis Valbuena (seventh last issue) rises to fourth following decision over Julio Gamboa. Enrique Sanchez, who previously held down the fourth spot, departs due to inactivity. The realignment pushes up Joan Guzman (eighth last issue), Osamu Sato (ninth last issue), and Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (10th last issue) one position each. Nadel Hussein is aboard at number 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: Gerson Guerrero (eighth last issue) exits after losing to Ricardo Vargas at bantamweight. Guerrero's departure bumps up Omar Narvaez (ninth last issue) and Damaen Kelly (10th last issue) to eighth and ninth, respectively, while unbeaten Lorenzo Parra debuts at number 10.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Rosendo Alvarez (number one last issue) wins THE RING's recognition as world champion with a close 12-round decision over Bebis Mendoza. This moves Jorge Arce (second last issue) into the number-one position, while Mendoza is number two. Alvarez' ascension allows everybody from fourth on down in the last issue to advance one place each. Newcomer Fahlan Sakkreerin is now number 10.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Miguel Barrera (second last issue) takes over the number-one spot following his knockout of Roberto Leyva, who falls from fourth to seventh. Jose Aguirre (first last issue) is now number two. The changes allow Chana Porpaoin (fifth last issue), Keitaro Hoshino (sixth last issue), and Joma Gamboa (seventh last issue) to each move up one spot. Kermin Guardia (ninth last issue) departs as he is now campaigning in another weight class. His exit advances Juan Palacios from 10th to ninth, and makes room for Isaac Bustos at number 10.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes.

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended April 8, 2003

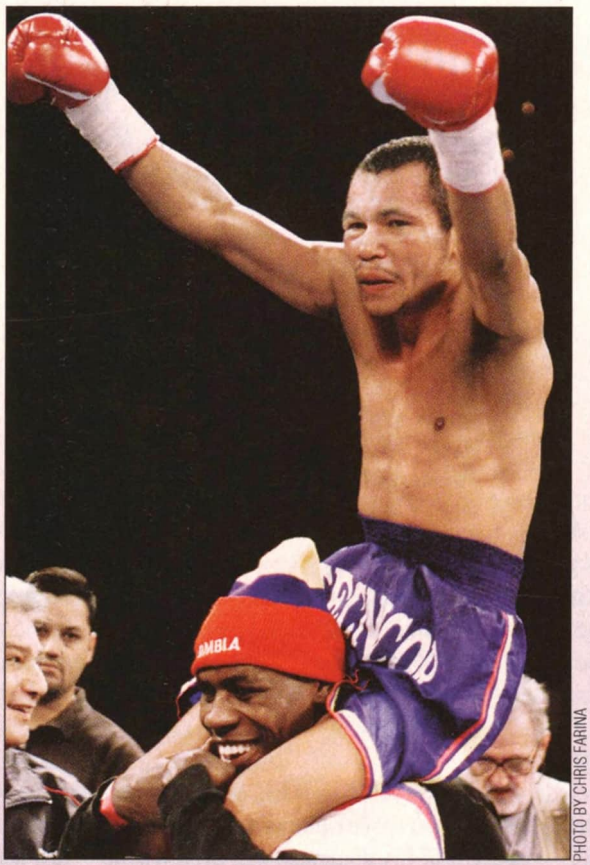


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Miguel Barrera took over the number-one spot at strawweight by knocking out Roberto Leyva

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 40-2-1 (31)

1. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI 36-2 (20)
2. **CORRIE SANDERS** South Africa 39-2 (29)
3. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)
4. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA 38-6-2 (25)
5. **DAVID TUA** New Zealand 42-3-1 (37)
6. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD 35-4-1 (29)
7. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY 50-4 (44)
8. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 40-2 (37)
9. **JOHN RUIZ** Chelsea, MA 38-5-1 (27)
10. **VITALI KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 32-1 (31)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: OSCAR DE LA HOYA
Los Angeles, CA 35-2 (28)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL 45-3 (25)
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA 22-2 (20)
3. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO** Spain 54-5 (36)
4. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 26-2-1 (20)
5. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 38-2 (35)
6. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 17-1-1 (12)
7. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI 45-4 (29)
8. **ALEX GARCIA** Mexico 21-0 (20)
9. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Aurora, CO 34-8-1 (18)
10. **ALEX BUNEMA** Dallas, TX 20-3-2 (12)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Mexico 56-3 (39)

1. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico 43-1 (32)
2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 40-2 (32)
3. **NASEEM HAMED** England 36-1 (31)
4. **DERRICK GAINER** Pensacola, FL 38-5-1 (24)
5. **SCOTT HARRISON** Scotland 19-1-1 (9)
6. **MANUEL MEDINA** Mexico 60-13 (27)
7. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM 52-3-2 (28)
8. **FRANKIE TOLEDO** Paterson, NJ 42-6-1 (17)
9. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa 33-2-1 (22)
10. **WILLIAM ABELYAN** Glendale, CA 22-4-1 (11)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-2 (12)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** Philippines 36-2-1 (27)
2. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico 47-3-1 (33)
3. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE** France 41-3-1 (21)
4. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA** Venezuela 22-2-1 (12)
5. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ** Mexico 33-3 (24)
6. **WILLIE JORRIN** Sacramento, CA 28-1-1 (12)
7. **JOAN GUZMAN** Dominican Republic 18-0 (14)
8. **OSAMU SATO** Japan 26-2-2 (15)
9. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG** Thailand 33-1-1 (16)
10. **NADEL HUSSEIN** Australia 29-1 (16)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 29-3 (27)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 40-1-1 (29)
3. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH 25-1-1 (22)
4. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark 53-2 (26)
5. **EDDY MOYA** Venezuela 15-2 (8)
6. **CRUZ CARBAJAL** Mexico 22-11-1 (18)
7. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA** Japan 23-3-2 (14)
8. **PETE FRISSINA** Tarpon Springs, FL 26-3-1 (15)
9. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 13-0 (12)
10. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 28-4 (16)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VASSILIY JIROV** Kazakhstan 31-0 (27)
2. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK** France 29-2 (21)
3. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE** Guyana 19-0 (16)
4. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI 65-4-2 (42)
5. **JOHNNY NELSON** England 42-12-2 (28)
6. **GUILLERMO JONES** Panama 29-2-2 (22)
7. **EZRA SELLERS** Washington, D.C. 26-5 (24)
8. **O'NEIL BELL** Atlanta, GA 19-1-1 (18)
9. **VIRGIL HILL** Bismarck, ND 48-4 (23)
10. **SEBASTIAN ROTHMAN** South Africa 16-1-2 (12)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER** Orlando, FL 20-1 (17)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** Germany 48-0 (38)
3. **ERIC HARDING** Philadephia, PA 21-2-1 (7)
4. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** Chicago, IL 44-3 (29)
5. **MEHDI SAHNOUNE** France 24-0 (21)
6. **JULIO GONZALEZ** Huntington Beach, CA 32-1 (21)
7. **BRUNO GIRARD** France 42-3-2 (7)
8. **LOU DEL VALLE** Bronx, NY 31-3-1 (21)
9. **GEORGE JONES** Paterson, NJ 19-2 (13)
10. **CLINTON WOODS** England 34-2 (20)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SVEN OTTKE** Germany 30-0 (6)
2. **JOE CALZAGHE** Wales 35-0 (28)
3. **ANTWUN ECHOLS** Davenport, IA 29-4-1 (26)
4. **MARKUS BEYER** Germany 27-1 (11)
5. **ERIC LUCAS** Canada 36-5-3 (13)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL** Ozark, AL 25-2-1 (18)
7. **CHARLES BREWER** Philadelphia, PA 39-9 (27)
8. **MADS LARSEN** Denmark 43-1 (36)
9. **ANTHONY MUNDINE** Australia 18-1 (14)
10. **MANUEL SIACA** Puerto Rico 16-4 (15)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS Philadelphia, PA 42-2-1 (31)

1. **HARRY SIMON** Namibia 23-0 (17)
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY** Washington, D.C. 34-2-1 (25)
3. **HOWARD EASTMAN** England 36-1 (33)
4. **ROBERT ALLEN** Atlanta, GA 35-4 (26)
5. **TITO MENDOZA** Panama 27-4 (20)
6. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN** Russia 16-3 (12)
7. **HASSINE CHERIFI** France 33-6-1 (20)
8. **RODNEY JONES** Lafayette, LA 27-3 (17)
9. **ERLAND BETARE** France 35-7-2 (16)
10. **CARL DANIELS** St. Louis, MO 48-4-1 (30)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: RICARDO MAYORGA Nicaragua 24-3-1 (22)

1. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta, GA 35-1 (26)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO** Mexico 28-3 (19)
3. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 31-2 (11)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD** Denmark 32-0 (25)
5. **ANTONIO DIAZ** Coachella, CA 37-4-1 (26)
6. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO** Italy 37-2 (23)
7. **MANUEL GOMEZ** Mexico 21-10 (16)
8. **ANDREW LEWIS** Guyana 22-2-1 (20)
9. **JAWAID KHALIQ** England 21-1-1 (13)
10. **RAY OLIVEIRA** New Bedford, MA 44-8-2 (21)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU Australia 30-1-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL** Washington, D.C. 51-3 (30)
2. **ZAB JUDAH** Brooklyn, NY 28-1 (21)
3. **ARTURO GATTI** Jersey City, NJ 35-6 (28)
4. **DeMARCUS CORLEY** Washington, D.C. 28-1-1 (16)
5. **VIVIAN HARRIS** Brooklyn, NY 22-1-1 (16)
6. **MICKY WARD** Lowell, MA 38-12 (27)
7. **OKTAY URKAL** Germany 32-1 (10)
8. **BEN TACKIE** Ghana 24-3 (15)
9. **DIOBELYS HURTADO** Miami, FL 35-3-1 (23)
10. **RICKY HATTON** England 32-0 (24)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER Grand Rapids, MI 29-0 (20)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO** Mexico 46-6-1 (42)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON** Denver, CO 35-2-1 (17)
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA** Pittsburgh, PA 36-0 (14)
4. **LEONARD DORIN** Canada 21-0 (7)
5. **JUAN LAZCANO** El Paso, TX 32-2-1 (24)
6. **ANGEL MANFREDY** Gary, IN 41-6-1 (30)
7. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN** Uzbekistan 36-0 (22)
8. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ** Mexico 49-5-1 (33)
9. **JULIEN LORCY** France 53-3-2 (37)
10. **JUAN GOMEZ TRINIDAD** Puerto Rico 23-2 (16)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ACELINO FREITAS** Brazil 33-0 (30)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR** Miami, FL 29-1 (18)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ** Mexico 39-2 (28)
4. **STEVE FORBES** Las Vegas, NV 22-1 (6)
5. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI** Thailand 28-2-1 (24)
6. **PHILLIP NDOU** South Africa 29-1 (28)
7. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSAK** Thailand 41-1 (23)
8. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ** Bellflower, CA 38-3-1 (23)
9. **CASSIUS BALOYI** South Africa 28-1 (16)
10. **NATE CAMPBELL** Jacksonville, FL 23-1 (21)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA** North Korea 28-2-1 (8)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ** Venezuela 23-0 (23)
3. **FERNANDO MONTIEL** Mexico 25-0-1 (19)
4. **LUIS PEREZ** Nicaragua 21-1 (14)
5. **MARTIN CASTILLO** Mexico 23-1 (14)
6. **FELIX MACHADO** Venezuela 22-4-1 (11)
7. **MAURICIO PASTRANA** Colombia 29-3-1 (19)
8. **LUIS BOLANO** Colombia 38-0 (28)
9. **OSCAR ANDRADE** Mexico 30-22-1 (17)
10. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA** Japan 23-2 (16)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ERIC MOREL** Madison, WI 32-0 (18)
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** Thailand 45-2 (25)
3. **IRENE PACHECO** Colombia 27-0 (20)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI** South Africa 27-4-2 (16)
5. **HAWK MAKEPULA** South Africa 20-2 (13)
6. **MALCOLM TUNACAO** Philippines 13-1-2 (9)
7. **PETER CULSHAW** England 23-1-1 (12)
8. **OMAR NARVAEZ** Argentina 13-0-1 (7)
9. **DAMAEN KELLY** Ireland 18-1 (8)
10. **LORENZO PARRA** Venezuela 19-0 (15)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ Nicaragua 32-2-1 (20)

1. **JORGE ARCE** Mexico 33-3-1 (25)
2. **BEBIS MENDOZA** Colombia 28-2 (23)
3. **PICHIT SIRIWAT** Thailand 25-2 (12)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA** Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
5. **YOSAM CHOI** South Korea 24-2 (13)
6. **HIDENOBU HONDA** Japan 24-1 (12)
7. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO** Mexico 66-8-4 (30)
8. **JOSE VICTOR BURGOS** Mexico 30-13-2 (15)
9. **MHIKIZA MYEKENI** South Africa 17-1 (6)
10. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN** Thailand 50-3-2 (19)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MIGUEL BARRERA** Colombia 20-0-2 (12)
2. **JOSE AGUIRRE** Mexico 29-1-1 (18)
3. **NOEL ARAMBULET** Venezuela 19-2-1 (10)
4. **CHANA PORPAOIN** Thailand 49-2-2 (17)
5. **KEITARO HOSHINO** Japan 22-9 (5)
6. **JOMA GAMBOA** Philippines 32-7-2 (22)
7. **ROBERTO LEYVA** Mexico 21-2-1 (18)
8. **DANIEL REYES** Colombia 28-1 (22)
9. **JUAN PALACIOS** Nicaragua 10-2 (8)
10. **ISAAC BUSTOS** Mexico 19-6-3 (9)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

THAT SETTLES THAT

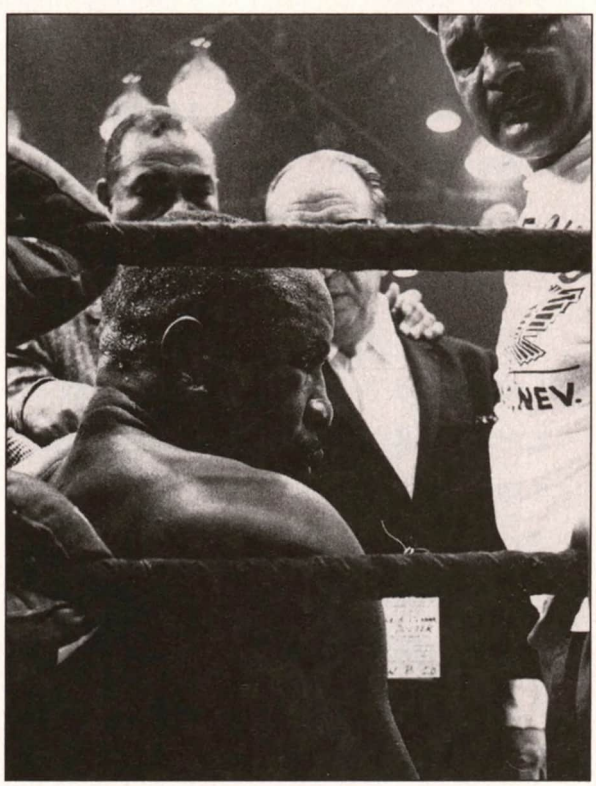
Boxing is chock full of mystery, intrigue, and gray areas. Through the decades, it has left more questions unanswered than a Q & A with Marcel Marceau. And some people love it. They thrive on wild speculation, conspiracy theories, educated guesses, and hunches. Not me. Loose ends and ongoing investigations drive me crazy. "Get to the bottom of things and fast!" has always been my mantra.

Some of the ring mysteries that have unfolded in my lifetime have gone unsolved for far too long. So allow me to save everyone the trouble of asking granddad what he remembers, or rewinding the VCR tape two dozen times to replay a single punch, or combing through page after page of dreary text. Here is the final word on what took place in Lewiston, Maine, Kinshasa, Zaire, and four other eerie stops in The Twilight Zone:

Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston, February 25, 1964

What we saw: Clay, a 7-1 underdog, stayed on his toes and had the powerful Liston frequently swinging at air. The champion pressed the action, loading up on every shot, but landing just one punch at a time. After Clay was blinded by liniment in his eyes and forced to run for survival in the fifth round, he rallied in the sixth, and the bout was even on the cards at the end of the round. But when the bell sounded for round seven, Liston remained on his stool, claiming he felt numbness from his left shoulder to his forearm.

What actually occurred: Evidence that before the fight Liston's promotional firm had bought the rights to stage Clay's first post-Liston bout, created suspicions of a fix. The real reason Liston quit, though, is because he *did* injure his left shoulder swinging and missing, possibly as early as round one. (It was liniment from Liston's bum wing, after all, that blinded Clay.) Liston suffered from bursitis in his shoulders, and a postfight exam revealed swelling and blood in his upper left arm. In fact, the athletic commission doctor concluded the injury was "sufficient to incapacitate him and to prevent him from defending himself."



Liston quits on his stool

Muhammad Ali-Sonny Liston, May 25, 1965

What we saw: Defending champion Ali landed a seemingly innocuous right to the chin, missed with a follow-up left hook, and the steel-chinned Liston toppled. With Ali screaming at him to get up, Liston rolled around on the canvas as though he'd been hit with a sledgehammer. Meanwhile, while maneuvering Ali to a neutral corner, referee Jersey Joe Walcott lost track of the count. He allowed the action to resume for a few seconds, but after learning that Liston had been down for at least 12 seconds, stopped the fight. The flabbergasted crowd chanted, "Fix! Fix! Fix!" and "Fake! Fake! Fake!"

What actually occurred: Ali had been critical of the late Malcolm X and there were rumors that his followers might try to assassinate the fighter. Liston, fearful that he could get caught in the line of fire, took a dive to get out of the ring as quickly as possible. As someone who had been down just once in his previous 37 bouts, Liston had no practice hitting the deck. And, obviously, no acting ability.

Muhammad Ali-George Foreman, October 30, 1974

What we saw: The challenger unveiled the "Rope-A-Dope," leaning on the ropes and fending off most of Foreman's bombs with his gloves and forearms. Then, in the eighth round, Foreman was sent reeling from a flurry of seemingly ordinary punches and dropped by a right that caught him square in the face. Big George failed to beat ref Zack Clayton's count and "The Greatest" was heavyweight king for a second time.

What actually occurred: The canvas was too spongy. The ropes were too loose. Someone poisoned his food. His corner told him to stay down when he was floored. Foreman blamed his loss on everything but a second counterpuncher on the grassy knoll.

The bottom line is that Foreman was frustrated and completely exhausted, and as we'd learn three years later when he was decked by featherfisted Jimmy Young, Big George was far more likely to go down from exhaustion than from a potent punch.

Sugar Ray Leonard-Roberto Duran II, November 25, 1980

What we saw: After foolishly slugging with "Hands Of Stone" and losing a decision five months earlier, Leonard wisely elected to move, jab, and nail the onrushing Duran with the occasional blinding combination in the rematch. "The Sugar Man" led after seven rounds, but by margins of only 4-2-1 (on two cards) and 4-3. Suddenly, after 2 minutes 44 seconds of action in the eighth, Duran turned his back on his rival, waved his hand, and told referee Octavio Meyron, "*No mas*."

What actually occurred: While Duran claimed he was suffering from stomach cramps, many observers speculated that he knew he was going to get knocked out and quit before suffering such an indignity. That's nonsense. The granite-jawed Duran was kayoed cleanly only twice—by Thomas Hearns and William Joppy—in 120 career bouts. And he wasn't going to be stopped by an opponent, Leonard, who hadn't even seriously stunned him in 22 rounds of action leading up to the surrender.

Duran quit because he was embarrassed by Leonard's mugging and taunting, particularly when his hated rival swung his right arm in windmill fashion then caught the distracted Duran in the nose with an eye-watering left jab. The Panamanian, who complained to his corner after the fifth round that he felt flat, decided he'd rather give up than endure another seven rounds of Leonard's antics. It's a decision Duran would come to regret—within minutes.

Ali employs the Rope-A-Dope

Lennox Lewis-Oliver McCall II, February 7, 1997

What we saw: McCall, who had kayoed Lewis in September '94, refused to return to his corner after the third round and actually broke down in tears after the fourth. The WBC heavyweight titlist threw few punches in rounds four and five and instead held his hands low and invited Lewis to nail him. After the Briton landed a flurry that sent McCall into the ropes in the fifth, ref Mills Lane mercifully stopped the fiasco.

What actually occurred: McCall's explanation, that he was employing a Rope-A-Dope strategy, would have made us laugh if it hadn't made him cry. What unfolded in front of an HBO audience and 4,800 fans at Las Vegas' Hilton Center was a prime-time emotional breakdown. McCall had actually spent part of his training camp undergoing drug and alcohol rehabilitation and was in no state of mind to play tic-tac-toe, let alone exchange artillery with one of the world's premier big men.

Evander Holyfield-Mike Tyson II, June 28, 1997

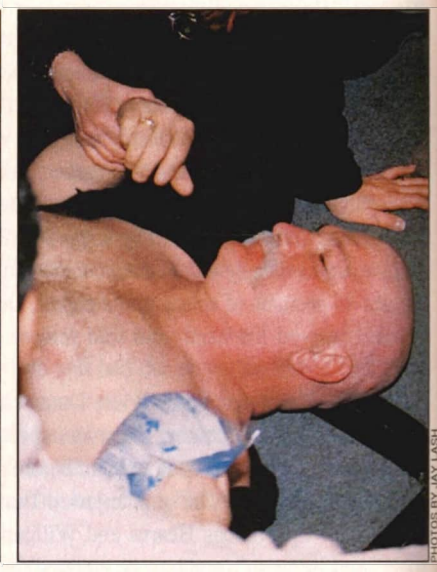
What we saw: "The Real Deal" won the first two rounds, but Tyson was complaining as early as 20 seconds into the fight about his opponent butting him. A clash of heads opened a gash over Iron Mike's right eye in the second round, and then, in the final minute of round three, Tyson took a bite out of Holyfield's right ear. When the action resumed after a delay of more than two minutes, Tyson bit the other ear and was disqualified by Lane at the conclusion of the round.

What actually occurred: Tyson had been thoroughly outclassed in the first meeting, seven months earlier. True, he was enraged and frustrated by Holyfield's butting; however, he was more unnerved by his inability to hurt Holyfield or outmuscle him on the inside. Tyson thus tried to get himself DQ'd as a means of escaping before enduring another thrashing. Proof that he was looking to be tossed: shoving Holyfield from behind after the first bite, then biting him again after having had more than two minutes to cool his rage and regain his composure.

Case closed. ■

Mills Lane calls time as Holyfield reels in pain

CAMERA CLICKS



PHOTOS BY JAY LASH

We hate to make jokes at the expense of a fallen man in need of medical attention ... but, hey, this is Norman Stone we're talking about here! When Stone and Alton Merkerson engaged in a battle of the trainers (left) at the weigh-in for the Roy Jones-John Ruiz fight, the Massachusetts motormouth got his comeuppance and had to be taken off on a stretcher (right). The only bad part for us was that Stone ended up shirtless, revealing that his shaved head isn't the only thing he has in common with Butterbean.

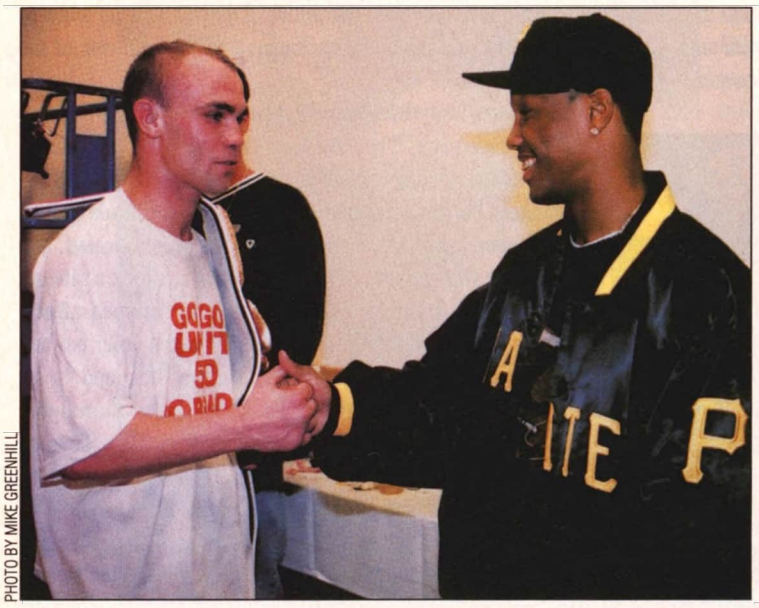


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

If there's one thing junior welterweight contenders should know, it's that any friendly confrontation with Zab Judah can end with a left hand flying at your head. Luckily for Mike "No Joke" Stewart, however, he escaped unscathed from this conversation with the excitable Mr. Judah—just as he did from his surprisingly one-sided fight with Chucky T earlier in the evening.

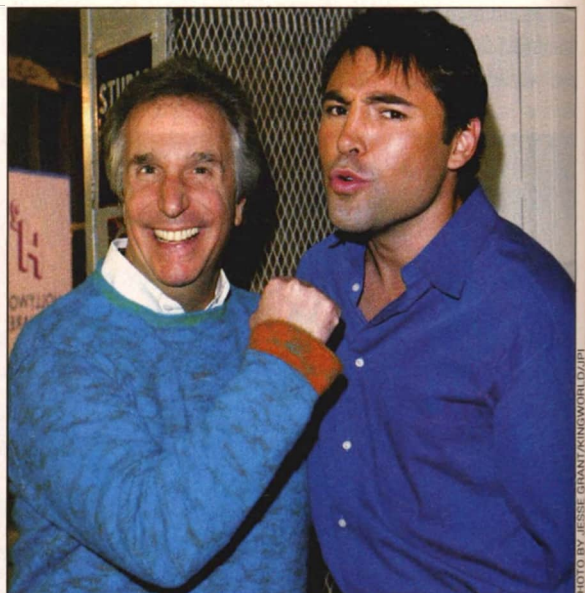


PHOTO BY JESSE GRANT/KINGWORLD/JPI

Two of the great sex symbols of their respective eras converged at a recent Hollywood Squares *taping, where executive producer Henry Winkler, formerly "The Fonz" on* Happy Days, *met with Oscar De La Hoya. Looking at Winkler, you can't help but think it was a little easier to be a sex symbol in the '70s than it is today.*

PHOTO BY JAY LASH

What's Lennox Lewis been doing that's so important that he can't find time to defend the world heavyweight title? Rolling around in birthday cake on Jimmy Kimmel Live, *among other things. Lennox fell into the cake during a pillow fight with Kimmel's cousin. So apparently the press conference brawl with Mike Tyson won't go down as the most undignified moment of Lewis' career.*

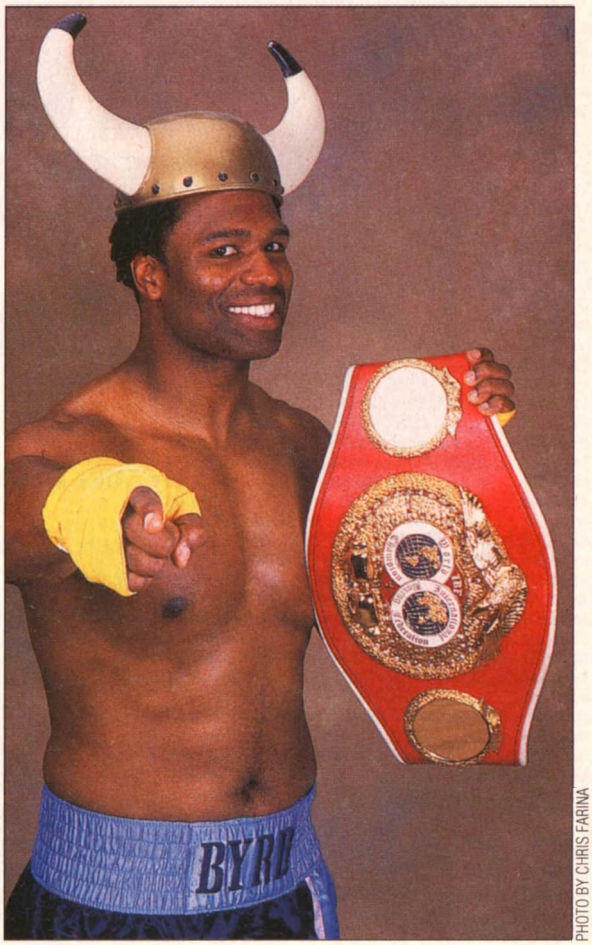


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

No, Chris Byrd isn't revealing to the world that he is descended from Viking heritage. He's merely showing off the headgear he intends to wear if he should ever find himself in a rematch with Evander "Commander Cranium" Holyfield.

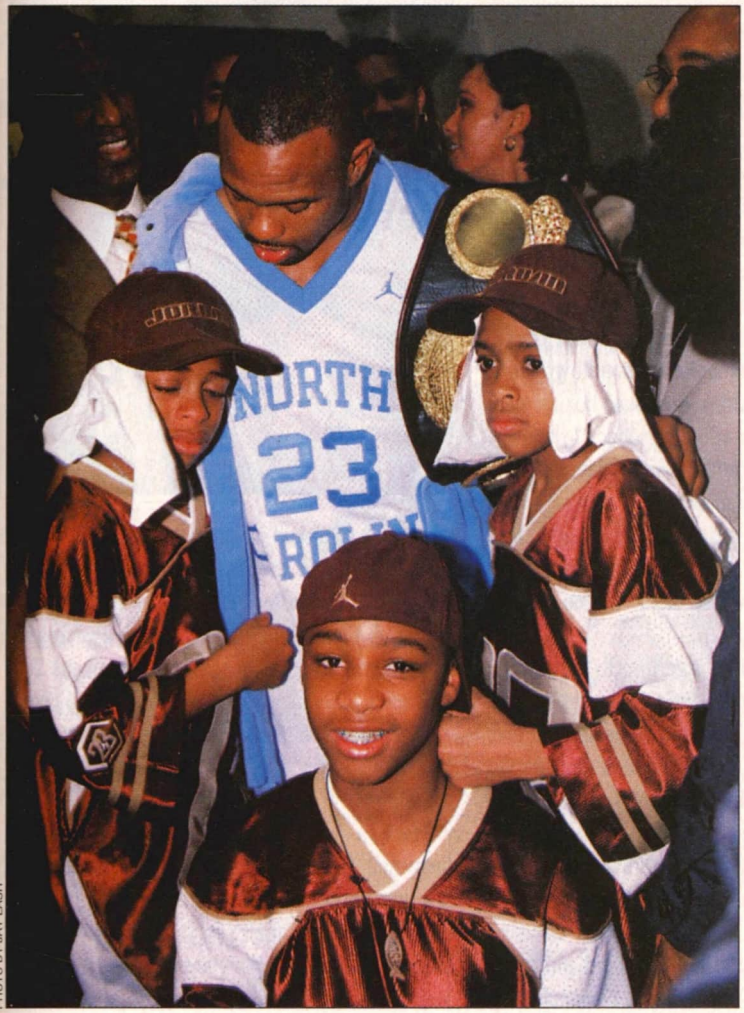


PHOTO BY JAY LASH

Though this may look like a commercial for Michael Jordan's apparel line, it's actually just a shot of Roy Jones' kids greeting their dad after his outstanding win over John Ruiz. We wonder if Jordan dresses his children in Jones gear ...

NOSTALGIA CORNER

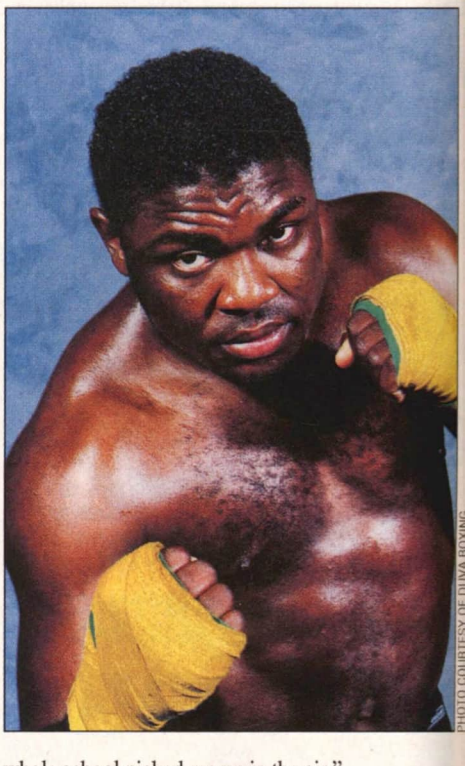
It's all well and good to bring a tomahawk to a fight ... until it falls into the other guy's hands. Welterweight contender Gaspar Ortega found his own weapon being used against him in this publicity shot prior to his 1962 bout against Charley Scott at Madison Square Garden. Underdog Scott went on to add Ortega's scalp to his collection a few days later, winning their 10-rounder on points.

NEW FACES

SAMUEL PETER

Heavyweight

By Mike Houser



PRO RECORD

2001		
Feb. 6	Gueorgui Christov, Alma-Ata, Kazak.	KO 1
May 10	James Lester, Phoenix, AZ	KO 3
May 25	George Chamberlain, Arica, Chile	KO 1
July 28	Shannon Head, Ft. Myers, FL	KO 1
Aug. 25	Fred Gatica, Laughlin, NV	KO 1
Sept. 28	Giles Knox, Las Vegas	KO 1
Nov. 10	Curtis Taylor, Bushkill, PA	KO 1
2002		
March 3	Marion Wilson, Scranton, PA	W 4
March 22	Julius Joiner, Phoenix	KO 1
May 24	Terry Porter, Tulsa, OK	KO 2
June 7	Francis Royal, Scottsdale, AZ	KO 2
July 27	Cornelius Ellis, Las Vegas	KO 2
2003		
March 7	Dale Crowe, Reno, NV	KO 4

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
13	13	0	1	2

The beatings came without warning or provocation. They came from a prefect where a large, God-fearing 16-year-old named Samuel Peter attended a technical school in Uyo, Nigeria. The prefect was liberal with his punishment, terrorizing and battering Peter and others with his fists or a large stick.

"He used to whip me because he thought I look cool," Peter recounted in his thick accent. "I don't know what was his problem. He was a prefect, so I decided not to do anything. We called him 'Chemical' because he made you fall to the ground like you just inhaled the bad gas."

One of five children, Peter was brought up by his parents to abide by the code of the Bible, so he respected authority and turned the other cheek. Peter lived at the school and was about to go home on holiday when the Akwa Ibow state boxing team paid a visit, wanting to use the grounds to train. A curious Peter had never seen anyone box before, and he began to watch the team.

"The boxing team was training and they looked at me and said, 'Come and join. Why are you standing there?'" Peter said. "I tell them, 'No, no, I'm not involved in boxing.'"

As they continued to urge him to participate, Peter could not get the sadistic Chemical and the many beatings off his mind, so he decided to give boxing a try. Peter got in line and took turns throwing punches. One of the coaches asked Peter if he was sure he had never boxed and made the class watch the way the youngster threw the left jab. What followed next still draws a mischievous grin and laugh from Peter.

"They called over Chemical and put us in gloves and let us box," said Peter as he punched his palm for effect. "I knocked him down and the whole school cheered. As he fall on the ground, I go after him and everyone say, 'No, no, no!' The whole school picked me up in the air."

Peter earned the nickname "The Knockout Sensation" soon after disposing of Chemical, and culminated a 20-bout amateur career by representing Nigeria as a super heavyweight in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia. Peter lost a controversial decision in the second round to Italy's Paolo Vidoz, who would eventually pick up the bronze medal.

Peter's devastating punching power drew him many suitors in Sydney, all vying for the chance to turn him professional. Little did Peter's would-be benefactors know, their fancy clothes, jewelry, and talk of big money wasn't impressing the religious youngster, but served to repel him instead. Peter did not want to turn professional, that is until he met Ivaylo Gotzev, then the manager of current

(Continued on page 55)

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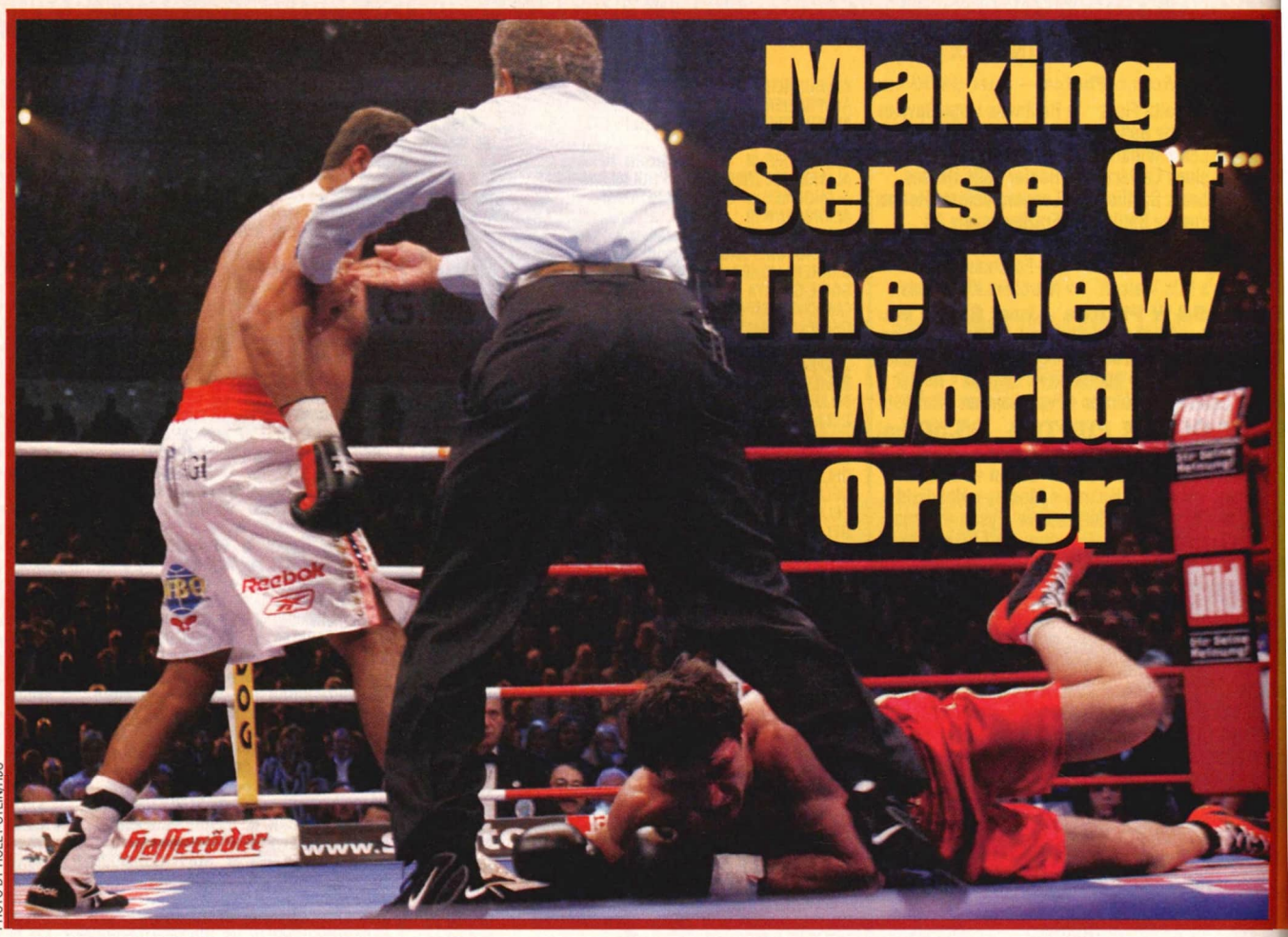


PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

Making Sense Of The New World Order

By William Dettloff

It was not long ago that the short-term future of the heavyweight division, at the top level, was very clear. There were two things we knew: Lennox Lewis would fight Mike Tyson again, if for no other reason than unless you're Alton Merkerson, it's not every day you get to slap the stuffing out of some clod who clearly is asking for it. And after that Lewis would face young Wladimir Klitschko. If he succeeded in beating Klitschko, as most thought he would, Lewis then would ride a big pile of money into blissful retirement, leaving the balance of the division scrambling toward the top spot like the Butterbean family rushing the tray of miniature chicken legs at the local Sizzler's.

Of course it should follow then that in March, two events occurred that turned things upside down, rendering the division's immediate future about as clear as one of Tyson's postfight anecdotes. First, Roy Jones thrashed WBA titlist John Ruiz, who was shown on that night at least to possess all the fighting skill of the average horse shoe crab and the class of one too—afterward he cursed referee Jay Nady for the loss rather than his own wretchedly untalented genes.

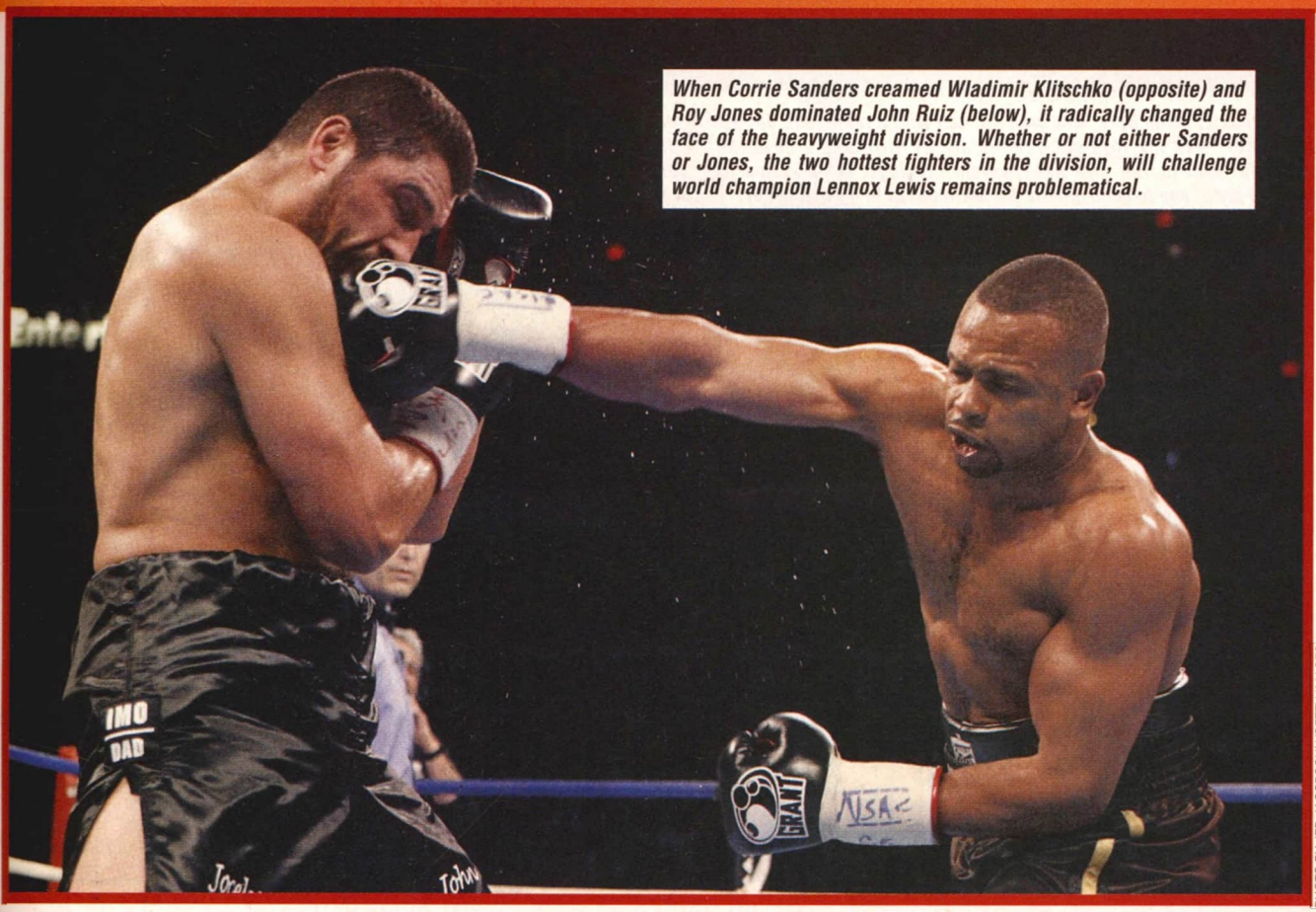
After that, underdog Corrie Sanders knocked out Klitschko, and rather easily at that. For Klitschko, a match with Lewis is all but dead. The champion is 37; how old will he be by the time the fight-buying public might be re-convinced of Klitschko's worthiness?

Those two events, spaced a mere week apart, have spawned myriad questions: Where does the heavyweight division go from here? Is the class that drives the boxing business about to bottom out entirely, or does all this activity open things up? How is Lewis affected? What will Jones do? Will we ever see Norm Stone again, and if so, can we ask him to stop shaving his head so we don't have to wear sunglasses when he walks into the room? And if he refuses, can we pummel him and get away with it the way Merkerson did?

First things first: Lewis is wholly in the driver's seat and we wouldn't be surprised at all if, after all this time and with the Klitschko fight dead, he said to hell with it and retired. He has enough money to buy a good share of Canada if he's so inclined, or at the very least the French-speaking parts. Of course, retirement would not preclude him from continuing to rake in a bundle on lawsuits, which has been a large source of his income over the last two or three years anyway.

The Tyson fight still is there for Lewis if he wants it. But as Tyson said after dispatching Cliff Etienne in February, he wants several fights first, and besides, he may need time to recover from a back injury he economically and in the strictest medical terms detailed to Showtime interviewer Jim Gray as: "spinal." The sense is that although Tyson wants more rounds before facing Lewis, Shelly Finkel doesn't. And as it's long been suspected that Finkel is the keeper of the magic elixir that keeps Tyson from killing us all, what Finkel wants, Finkel usually gets.

The RING UNSCRAMBLES THE HEAVYWEIGHT MESS



When Corrie Sanders creamed Wladimir Klitschko (opposite) and Roy Jones dominated John Ruiz (below), it radically changed the face of the heavyweight division. Whether or not either Sanders or Jones, the two hottest fighters in the division, will challenge world champion Lennox Lewis remains problematical.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

IBF titleholder Chris Byrd, who won the belt with a one-sided decision over Evander Holyfield last December, was the indirect beneficiary of Klitschko's downfall, rising to the number-one contender spot in The Ring heavyweight rankings. While some fans don't like Byrd's defense oriented style, you have to admire his willingness to fight anybody.

Outside of Tyson, there are no opponents left for Lewis that would provide the financial benefit required to keep him interested. Who is there? Surely not Sanders, Klitschko's conqueror. He's 37 years old already, was stopped by Rahman a couple of years back, and doesn't have the charisma to rally fan support to his side. Moreover, his southpaw style, his size, his hand speed, and his power make him unnecessarily dangerous for Lewis. For those reasons it'll never happen. Besides, with his mustache gone, Sanders looks disturbingly like ex-footballer and fight game embarrassment Marc Gastineau, and for that alone he should be coerced into retirement. Fortunately, as we went to press, he reportedly was close to signing for a fight with Chris Byrd. That might do it.

Other opponents do not interest Lewis. He's already stated his intention never to face Byrd, who, though he probably would lose to Lewis, could end up making him look silly. Lewis' unique way of dismissing challengers he doesn't want to fight—"It would be no competition"—clearly is a cover, but it's worked well enough for him. Many have bought it, so Byrd is relegated to defending against IBF challengers and hoping someone he can make a buck against will face him. He and Lewis assuredly will never fight.

Kirk Johnson looked good flattening Lou Savarese in March, and immediately,

FIVE HEAVYWEIGHT FIGHTS WE WANT TO SEE

Roy Jones-Mike Tyson

The biggest and most intriguing fight there is right now. Would Jones be able to stay away and still get work done? What happens if Tyson lands? And what would be the over/under on how long it takes before Tyson snaps and smashes Jones with his ring stool?

Roy Jones-Lennox Lewis

A win here by Jones would eclipse Billy Conn's near win against Joe Louis, and who could deny him then? Sure Lewis would be more dangerous than Ike Ibeabuchi on Viagra, but isn't it worth the risk?

Evander Holyfield-Mike Tyson III

How is this anything but a big event? Holyfield will have Tyson's number for as long as they're both breathing. The lure is the possibility that Tyson completely loses it this time and chews on Holyfield's eyeball or nose.

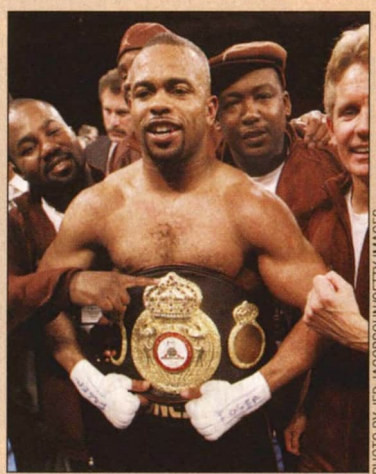


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Jones vs. either Lewis or Tyson would be huge

Mike Tyson-David Tua

For a couple of rounds at least, this would make Foreman-Lyle look like Frank Bruno-Oliver McCall. You think Ray Mercer may have tried to bribe Jesse Ferguson? By the fourth round Tyson would be sending strippers into Tua's corner.

Alton Merkerson-Rock Newman

Merkerson is 1-0 against obnoxious managers. Let's get Newman back in the mix and get him to 2-0.

—WD

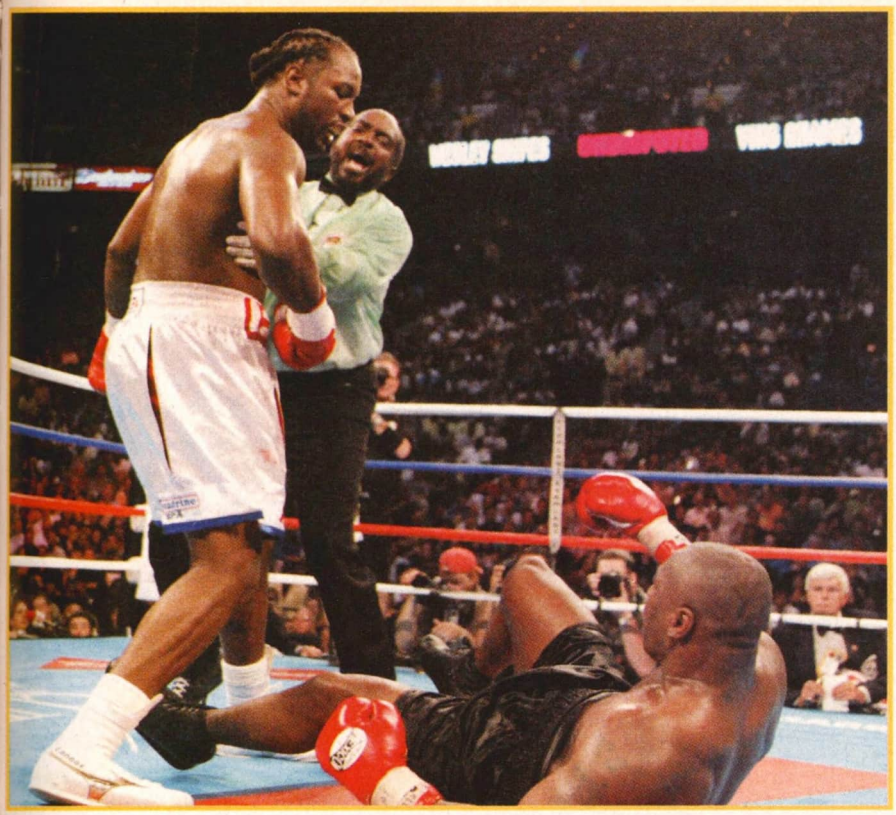


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Even though Lewis gave Tyson an emphatic beating in their June 2002 bout in Memphis (above), Tyson's one-round blowout of Cliff Etienne in February 2003 (below) began the rebuilding process that could lead to Lewis-Tyson II. Even so, a lot of fans would rather see Tyson fight Jones.

his promoters, Duva Boxing, started lobbying for an all-Canadian showdown with Lewis. That's curious marketing for two reasons: First, Lewis spends about as much time in Canada as Bernard Hopkins spends in anger management classes. Second, Johnson was shown in his loss to Ruiz last July to have a ticker less reliable than Dick Cheney's. There's no fight there. Also, cross Hasim Rahman and David Tua's names off the list; Lewis already has soundly beaten both of them. Jameel

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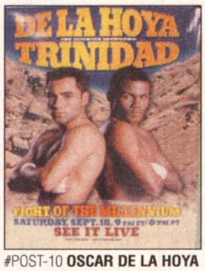
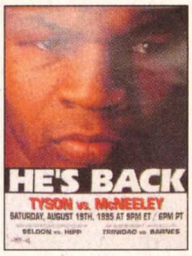
#POST-11 MUHAMMAD ALI vs. SONNY LISTON

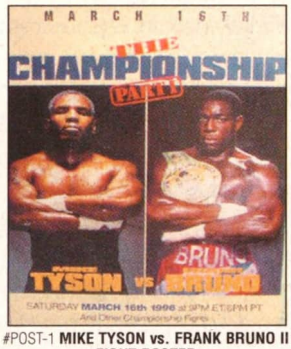


#POST-10 OSCAR DE LA HOYA vs. FELIX TRINIDAD FIGHT POSTER

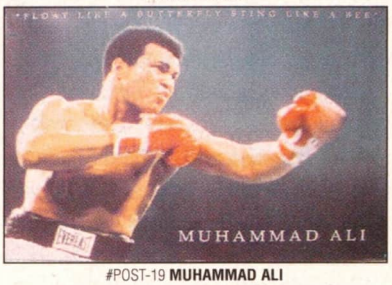


#POST-2 MIKE TYSON vs. PETER McNEELEY FIGHT POSTER

#POST-6 ROY JONES JR. vs. REGGIE JOHNSON FIGHT POSTER



#POST-1 MIKE TYSON vs. FRANK BRUNO II FIGHT POSTER



#POST-19 MUHAMMAD ALI

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McCline can never again be trusted not to freeze in a big fight. Who else is there? After the top six or seven, the heavyweight division is thinner than a kid spawned by Lara Flynn Boyle and Erik Morales.

The last possibility is Vitali Klitschko, who has tried like heck to get Lewis in there and who is his mandatory challenger according to the WBC. If Lewis decides to continue in lieu of an immediate fight with Tyson, Klitschko will likely be the challenger. Do what you will with the opinion expressed by most that of the two brothers it was Wladimir who showed more promise. The older Klitschko, though likely the harder puncher, has demonstrated all the versatility of a sewer drain. And he may never live down quitting against Byrd.

So for Lewis it plays out in one of two ways and it depends on who wins the argument: Tyson or Finkel. If Tyson wins the argument and gets two or three more fights, Lewis likely will retire rather than wait around another seven or eight years for him, since for whatever reason, it takes that long to put on a Tyson fight these days. If Finkel wins the argument—and we have heard that he is a veritable Vin Diesel in Norman Fell clothing—Lewis will do the rematch and then retire. Provided, of course, that he wins it. If he doesn't, the rubber match, available on pay-per-view for a paltry $1,399.99, will break all the records while simultaneously sending Larry Holmes into training for Holmes-Butterbean II.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Following his younger brother's loss to Sanders, it's up to Vitali Klitschko (pictured) to try to salvage the family's reputation. Vitali has taken Lewis to court in an attempt to force a match with the world champion, which could end up as part of a doubleheader that also features Tyson.

In late-March, however, there was talk of a possible third alternative, a compromise that would give Tyson at least one more tuneup prior to a rematch with Lewis. This would involve Lewis and Tyson fighting in separate bouts on the same bill. Ideally, Lewis would take on Vitali Klitschko, with Tyson matched against suitably soft opposition.

From a fan's perspective, the best option for Lewis is a fight with Jones. It's a natural. It would be a huge fight driven by the question of how far Jones' immense talent could take him against a giant. We saw quite readily that it was enough to get him past Ruiz, but then, on a good day Elton John might be able to get past Ruiz. Lewis, however, would present Jones with an entirely different set of obstacles. It would be one of the more intriguing heavyweight fights of the last 20 years and not because one guy was threat-

FIVE HEAVYWEIGHT FIGHTS WE DON'T WANT TO SEE

Roy Jones-Chris Byrd

We know it's a purist's delight, but the whole point of enjoying Jones against heavyweights is the speed vs. power thing—not the speed vs. defense thing. If you want to watch two guys not hitting each other, make McCline-Shannon Briggs II. Or Michael Moorer against almost anyone.

Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson II

We have one guy who can't wait to retire and another who will implode the minute he does. This would feature about as much passion as six minutes under a bridge with a $20 hooker from Secaucus. We'll pass

Roy Jones-Evander Holyfield

It takes longer for Holyfield to get off a combination these days than it does Don King to wrap up a press conference. The only drama would be wondering what allegedly injured body part Holyfield would blame for the loss.

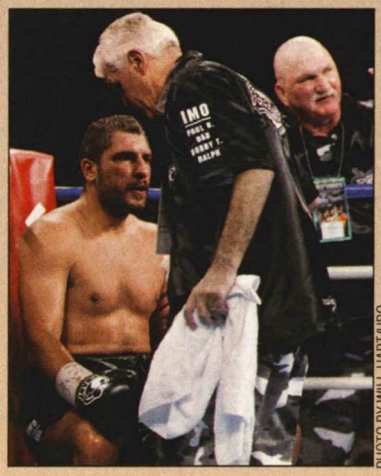


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Have Ruiz and Stone (far right) worn out their welcome?

Lennox Lewis-Vitali Klitschko

The potential exists for Klitschko to nail Lewis with a right hand, but then what? Asking Klitschko to be interesting would be like asking John Ashcroft to hug a hippie: He just couldn't do it.

John Ruiz-Anyone

We haven't seen such an undeserving no-talent get wealthy since the Osbourne kids renegotiated their contract with MTV. Good riddance.

—WD

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

David Tua's stock dropped after his performance in a 12-round draw with Hasim Rahman, and Rahman, though perceived by many as deserving of the victory, didn't exactly create clamor for another shot at Lewis either. Clearly, neither of these overweight heavys are the division's savior.

ening to eat the other guy's kids, or because of a press conference melee—but for the right reasons for a change. There's just one problem: Neither guy appears to want it.

It wasn't long after Jones handled Ruiz that Lewis all but dismissed the fight out of hand, much in the way he did Byrd. And Jones isn't in any rush either. At this writing he was negotiating, reportedly, with Madison Square Garden to host a fight with Holyfield, who at this stage would have roughly as much chance of beating Jones as Rosie O'Donnell has of winning a Jennifer Lopez look-alike contest. It's the least threatening of the big heavyweight fights out there for Jones, and that doesn't speak well to his willingness to take the fights that are the most challenging and the most potentially exciting. (It's shocking we know, but remember, these are big heavyweights.) He's said already it would take $100-million to fight Lewis or Tyson, and only half of that to face a similarly sized opponent of lesser experience.

The other option for Jones, of course, is to stay where he is and fight heavyweight contenders. His mandatory also is Vitali Klitschko, and maybe you could see Jones beating him, along with maybe Rahman or McCline or Sanders and some of the smaller and/or lesser-experienced guys out there. But it only makes financial sense for him if it is leading to something else, which you get the feeling it isn't. Wholly by his own choice, Jones' future at heavyweight is probably shorter than a Micky Ward hook to the body. And that's not good—for anybody.

Of course there is the option of a partial unification fight with Byrd, which was the whole point of this thing to begin with, with the goal a unification fight with Lewis. But like Lewis, Jones has passed on Byrd. While he didn't insult Byrd the way Lewis did, he said a match between two highly skilled defensive boxers wouldn't exactly titillate the masses, and even though he's probably right, what the hell does Byrd have to do to get a big-money fight anyway? Hire Stone as his manager?

Really, is there a heavyweight opponent out there for Jones, outside of Lewis or Tyson, who would capture the public's passion? None of the heavyweights are stars. They're the guys Lewis has been feasting on over the last decade, most of them anyway, and no one will care much if they ascend to the top. None of them is exceptional or even particularly interesting, except for Jones. He is the wild card. It would be an enormous boost for the division in particular and the game in general if he became the man after Lewis' departure. The mere fact that he is the world's best boxer fighting above his best weight against giant heavyweights might be enough to keep the division at least reasonably entertaining. But it also needs heavyweights that are hungry.

Anything of real import that happens in the heavyweight division over the next year depends on Lewis, Tyson, and Jones. Everyone else is more or less in wait-mode. We're there too—all of us are, and as a result it's more crowded in here than in Pamela Anderson's brassiere. But that's all right. There are worse places to be. ■

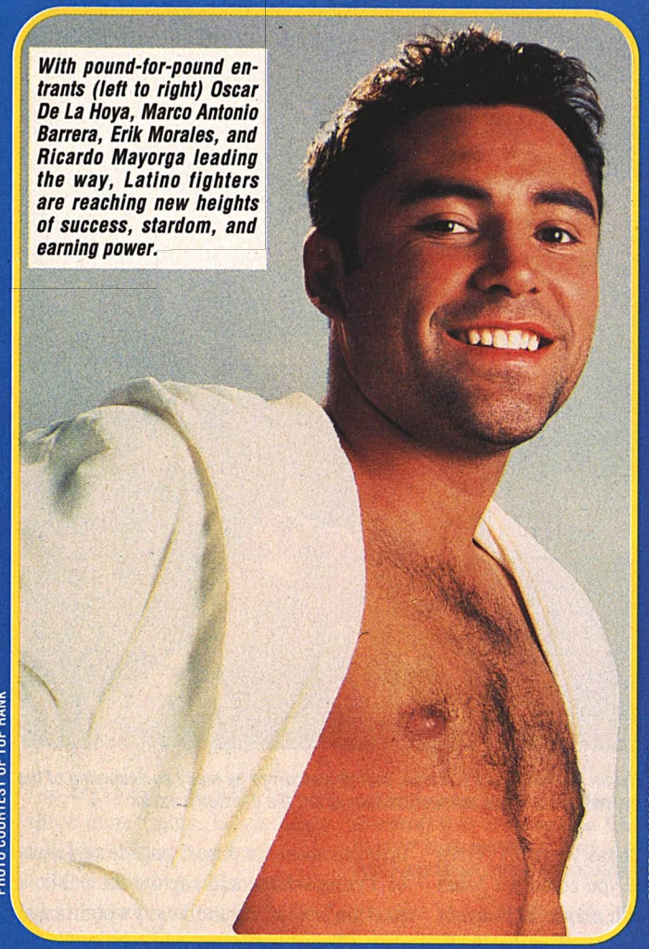
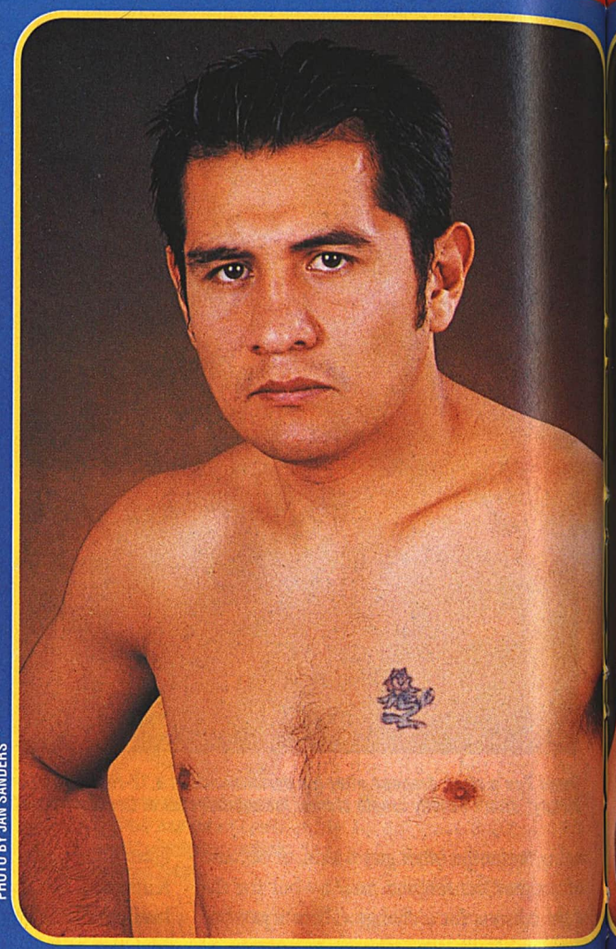


PHOTO COURTESY OF TOP RANK

With pound-for-pound entrants (left to right) Oscar De La Hoya, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, and Ricardo Mayorga leading the way, Latino fighters are reaching new heights of success, stardom, and earning power.



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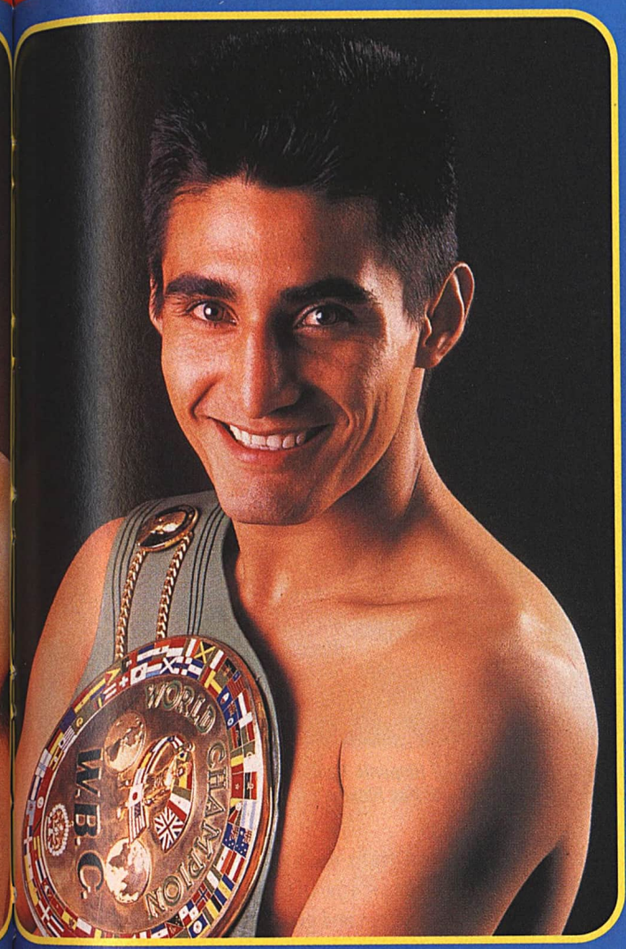


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

IS BOXING BECOMING BOXEO?

Exploring The Latino Revolution

By Eric Raskin

Every time promoter Bob Arum has opened his mouth in recent years, he's reminded us that the Latino community is growing more rapidly than any other segment of the population in America, and that, in turn, the ethnicity of the boxing fan in America is skewing Hispanic more than ever before.

But if Tim Austin, Vernon Forrest, and Ricardo Williams thought it was only the seats in the arena and the couches in front of the television that are being taken over more and more by Latinos, they found out otherwise in their first fights of 2003. All three undefeated African-Americans—one a titlist who'd reigned for more than five years, one a recognized RING world champion, and one an Olympic silver medalist considered possibly the best young American prospect—were upset by Hispanic fighters. Austin got bumped off by 2-1 underdog Rafael Marquez of Mexico, Forrest was shockingly razed in three rounds by 6-1 underdog Ricardo Mayorga of Nicaragua, and Williams got beaten up over 10 rounds by Mexican journeyman Juan Valenzuela, a last-minute substitute who probably would have been at least a 30-1 longshot if odds had even been posted.

Was it just coincidence that three major fights within a three-week span ended with Hispanics scoring upsets over non-Hispanics? Or is this indicative of some sort of trend, a sign that Latinos are dominating the fight game more than ever?

Before we get too deep into searching for the answer to that question, let's first address quickly the fact that discussions of race are always complex and delicate. In the specific case of Latinos and Hispanics, we must define before we can assign. What do the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" mean exactly? For the purposes of this article, we'll go with common usage rather than dictionary definition, and make them more or less interchangeable. But it's important to understand that both refer to ethnicity, not race. In other words, a fighter like Colombia's Irene Pacheco, whose appearance is as "black" as any African-American, can be considered both black (his race) and Hispanic (his ethnicity).

With that said, of the 48 major alphabet titlists or world champions in boxing at press time, 21 are Latino. That figure includes Mexican-Americans, Mexicans,

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Rafael Marquez' upset kayo of unbeaten Tim Austin was one of several examples early in 2003 of Hispanic fighters knocking off favored African-American fighters. Marquez and his older brother Juan Manuel now both have major alphabet belts, raising Mexico's total to nine.

Latin Americans, South Americans, Puerto Ricans, etc. Compare those numbers to five years ago. As of the end of 1997, there were 16 Hispanic titlists, and 33 non-Hispanic. That means Latino titlists as a percentage of the whole have gone up from below 33 percent five years ago to nearly 44 percent today.

So it's not just three isolated fights in a three-week span. We have quantitative proof that the success of Latino fighters is on the rise.

As those who've been paying attention to the boxing game know, the opportunities for Hispanic fighters, at least as far as American television is concerned, have improved dramatically in recent years. The Spanish-language station Telefutura airs boxing every Friday night (with Arum's Top Rank controlling most of those dates), HBO Latino just launched the new show *Boxeo De Oro* (a *KO Nation*-type experiment centered around young Hispanic fighters and fueled by the attachment of Oscar De La Hoya's name to the product), Telemundo was set to be begin broadcasting Saturday afternoon boxing in May as part of the Main Events-NBC deal, and Showtime is in the midst of a contract with Arum for six "Latin Fury" shows in '03, including three on pay-per-view.

All of which begs the question: Is the success of the fighters breeding opportunity, or is it a case of opportunity breeding success?

"I don't think Latino fighters are necessarily better than they were. I think they're mostly just succeeding more because they're being featured more," said Ricardo Jimenez, a publicist for Top Rank and a former sports editor of the Spanish-language newspaper *La Opinion*. "There have always been good fighters, but they never had the opportunities. Now they're more well-known, more respected. And the people handling the fighters have become more sophisticated. These fighters used to be brought in as cannon-fodder, as opponents. Now they're being moved properly, because promoters realize the Latino fighters can be the stars.

"In the past, the Mexicans would have to fight each other. They used to pair Mexicans off, and maybe one would emerge and get a title shot. Now, several in the same division can get a shot. Look at featherweight. The three top fighters are all Mexicans. Before, Erik Morales and Juan Manuel Marquez would have had to fight each other to get where they are now. Instead, they can now become stars without each other. They can get TV fights without having to go through each other."

Jimenez points out Antonio Margarito as a perfect example of how times have changed for Latino fighters in just the last few years. When he turned pro at age 15 in 1994, the Mexico-born Margarito was thrown in with whomever, whenever, and lost decisions in three of his first 12 fights. He became a good "opponent" on the Southern California circuit, a regular in Los Angeles, Anaheim, and Indio. But a funny thing happened after Margarito turned 18: He started beating the fighters to whom he was brought in to lose. Gradually, the promoters realized Margarito had star potential himself, and even-

tually he was the one being fed hand-picked opponents on ESPN2. In the last two years, Margarito has fought three times on Showtime and once on HBO and is becoming the sort of attraction he might not have had a chance to become in an era when fewer Latino fighters were given opportunities.

While Margarito is only a WBO beltholder, the number of native Mexicans who hold the more widely recognized alphabet belts (WBA, WBC, IBF) or who hold RING championships is astounding. You have Alex Terra Garcia at junior middleweight, Marco Antonio Barrera, Morales, and Juan Manuel Marquez at featherweight, Oscar Larios at junior feather, Rafael Marquez at bantam, Jorge Arce and Jose Victor Burgos at junior flyweight, and Jose Antonio Aguirre at straw-weight—a total of nine Mexican titleholders. At any other given time over the past decade, you'd find an average of just three or four Mexican titlists at once. While a wide assortment of Latino countries are doing well in boxing, it's clearly Mexico that is making the most pronounced strides.

But it's not only at the championship level that Hispanics are enjoying great success right now. Among the most promising prospects coming out of the 2000 Olympic crop, a disproportionate number are Latino. Sure, there are a handful of Muhammad Abdullaevs and Jermain Taylors who are making names for themselves. But most of the best newcomers, or at least the most visible, are Hispanic: Puerto Rican Olympian Miguel Cotto; Mexican Olympian Francisco Bojado;

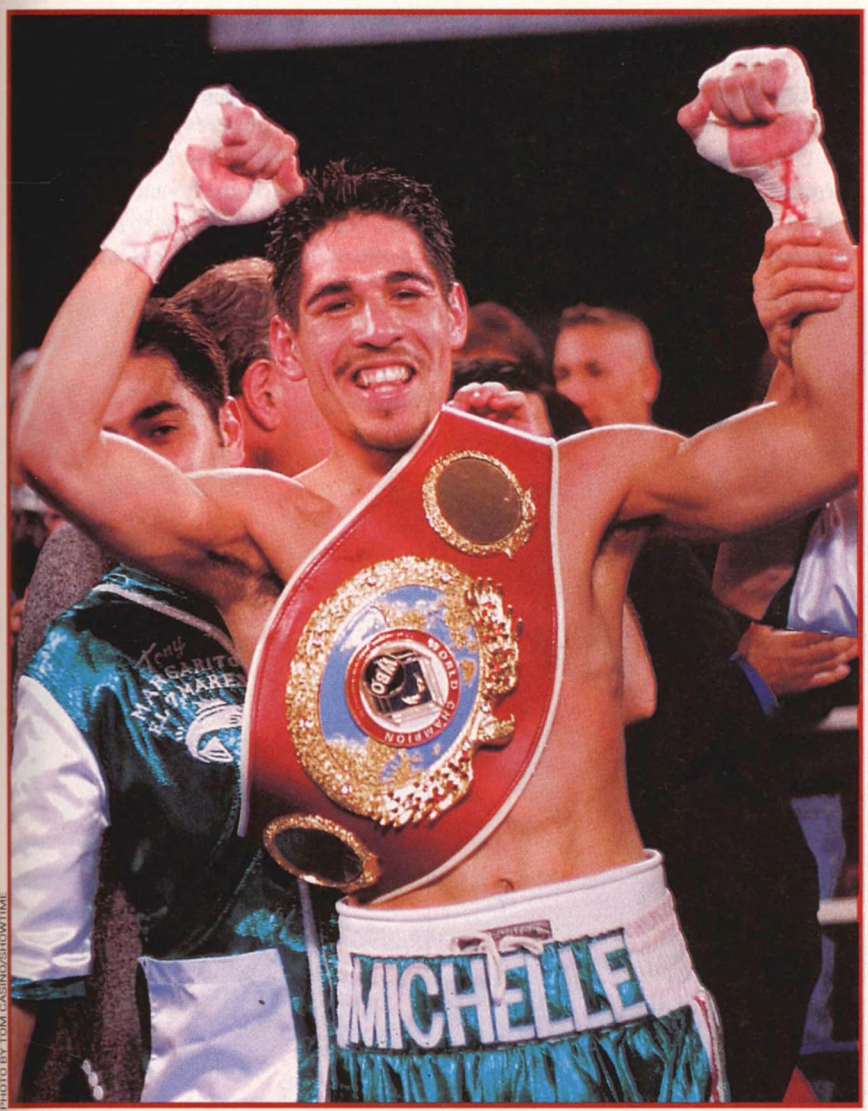
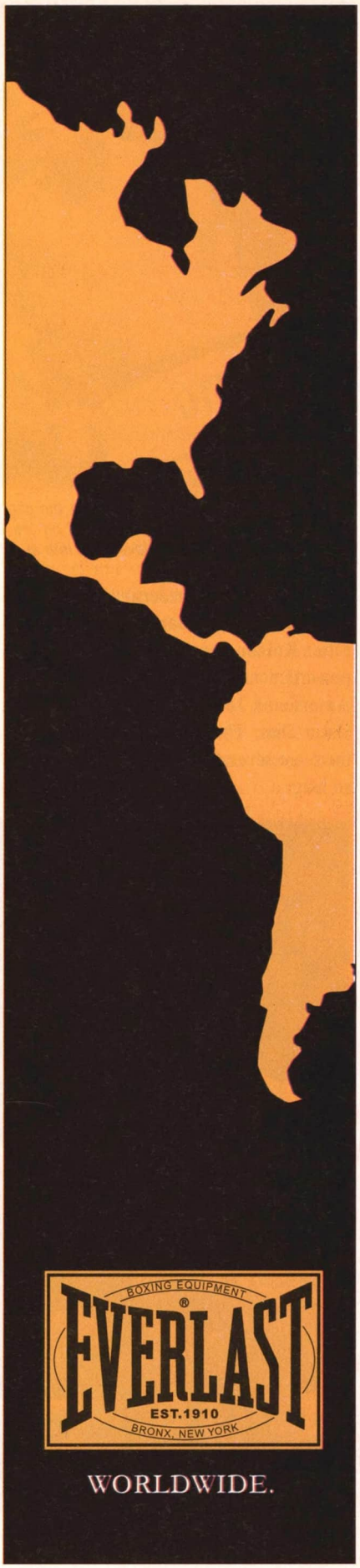


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

In the early stages of his career, Antonio Margarito served as a typical example of how Latino fighters were often matched carelessly. But Margarito has since turned his career around, and, like many Hispanic fighters, is now being promoted as a potential star.



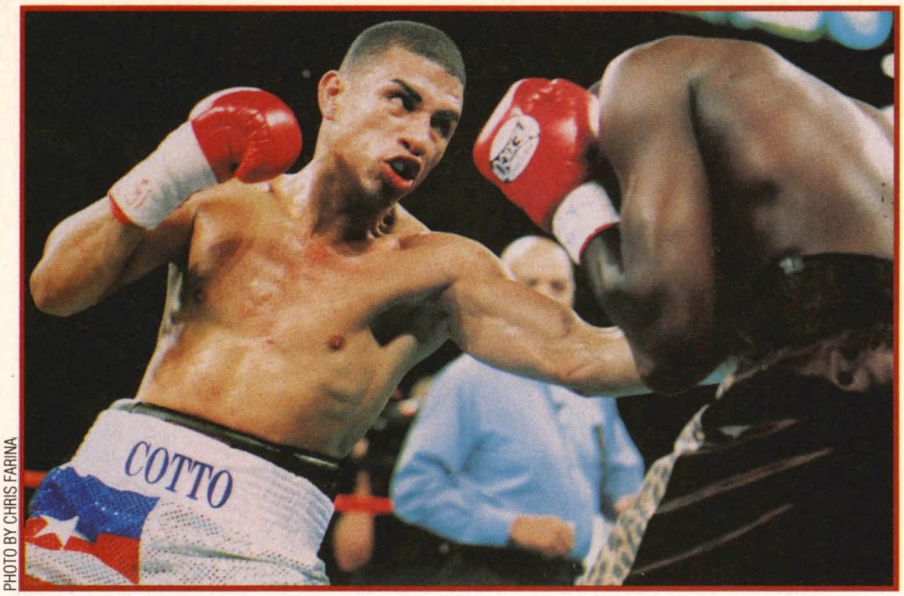


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Puerto Rico's Miguel Cotto is leading the charge of Latino prospects coming out of the Olympic class of 2000. Cotto got a prime spot on the Barrera-Morales II undercard against Justin Juuko (pictured), and has quickly developed into an attraction.

Dominican Olympian Jerson Ravelo; U.S. Olympian Rocky Juarez; Brazilian kayo artist Kelson Pinto; Puerto Rican-born powerpuncher Kermit Cintron; Mexican-Americans Jose Aguiniga, Juan Diaz, Oscar Diaz. The list goes on and on, and there are several explanations for why it's so long.

"It has to do with the role models that kids look up to," said HBO Sports Senior Vice President Kery Davis, one of the driving forces behind *Boxeo De Oro*. "Guys like Oscar De La Hoya, Marco Antonio Barrera—growing up in a Latino household now, you're idolizing these guys. There are not, for example, as many superstar role models among African-American boxers. More Latino kids are watching boxing, they're getting involved in the sport, and so the pool of young Latino fighters is deeper now."

Jimenez agrees that idol worship has helped get young Hispanics interested in boxing—as has the money their idols are making.

"A big breakthrough was the first Barrera-Morales fight," Jimenez said. "The littler guys saw that and said, 'Wait a minute, there's money for us there.' They see the purses these guys are getting, and they work harder, they stay in the amateurs longer. Look at the Mexican Olympic team. In the past, if one guy made it to the Olympics from Mexico, that was great. In 2000, they had six guys there. Bojado got more publicity than the rest, but there are several other good fighters, like Cesar Morales and Daniel Ponce De Leon. Six guys. That's unheard of for Mexico."

In bridging the gap from prospects to contenders, the television outlets have been invaluable. *Boxeo De Oro*, specifically, is focused on the up-and-coming fighters, and while the exposure level isn't the same as being on *World Championship*

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Julio Diaz stopped Ernesto Zepeda in a bloody, entertaining battle on the March 22 "Latin Fury" show promoted by Bob Arum and distributed by Showtime's pay-per-view arm. Though the PPVs haven't been money makers so far, Arum uses them to keep his fighters busy and advance their careers.

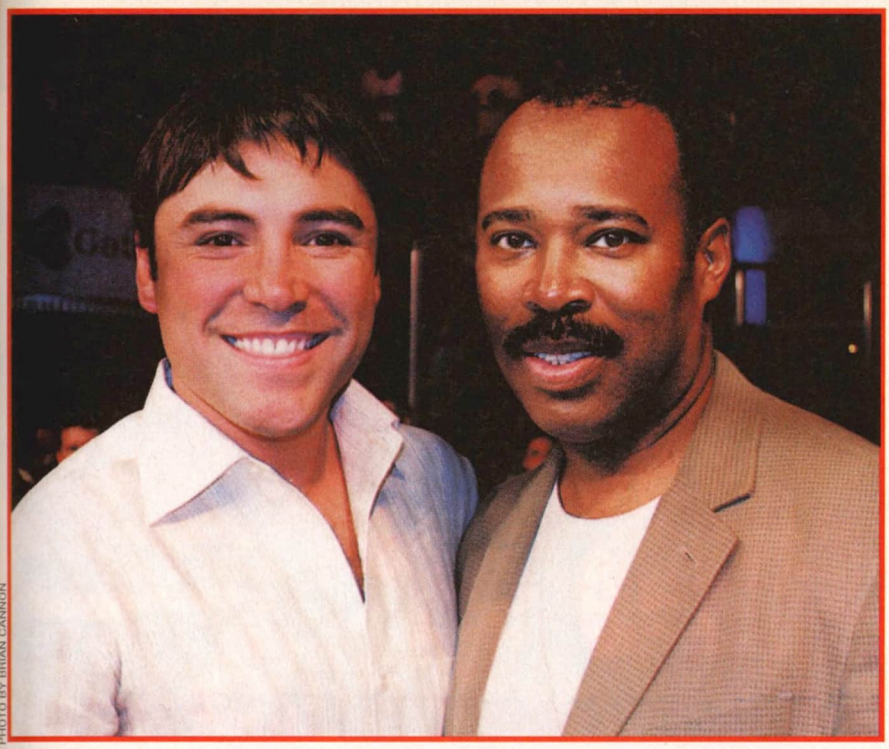


PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON

De La Hoya and Kery Davis have joined forces to launch the bi-weekly show* Boxeo De Oro *on HBO Latino. Davis feels the pool of young Hispanic fighters is deeper these days because of role models like De La Hoya inspiring Latino kids to try boxing.

Boxing (HBO Latino is available only to 45 percent of HBO subscribers, but that number is steadily increasing), it's still a high-profile forum for young fighters like Jose Navarro and Henry Bruseles who otherwise might struggle to find TV dates.

Telefutura has been a tremendously useful breeding ground, and though exposure there is also limited (parent network Univision has 260 affiliates, compared to 90 at this point for Telefutura), the weekly shows are a perfect way to keep promising Hispanic boxers busy. Cotto, who is becoming a major attraction well before anyone expected him to, laid the foundation by fighting on Telefutura a half-dozen times in the first 15 months of his career.

The Latin Fury shows, which focus primarily on championship-level fighters rather than prospects, provide perhaps the most far-reaching exposure because Showtime and SET PPV are available all across the country. The pay-per-views generally feature four fights and the Showtime broadcasts include two, meaning an extra 18 high-visibility TV fights (or 36 slots) have been made available to Hispanic fighters. Unfortunately, the pay-per-view element limits the audience quite a bit, and the sales on the initial PPV (a February 1 card headlined by Juan Manuel Marquez vs. Manuel Medina) have been estimated at a mildly disappointing 40,000 buys. But sometimes you have to take one step back to take two steps forward, as Arum reminded us in an interview with the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

"Marquez made such a hit that HBO wants him. I got a multifight contract for Miguel Cotto because of his performance on that show against Cesar Bazan. Even though that show lost money, it was an artistic success," Arum said. "On that card, I needed 50,000 [buys to break even], so I ended up losing about $125,000. But I consider it a good investment."

It's not only the promoters who sometimes have to take one step back to take two forward. The fighters do it too, in a way, and if there is an argument that success is breeding opportunity—in other words, that the Hispanic fighters really are better than they used to be—it exists because more of them are breaking from the Mexican slugger stereotype and constantly looking for ways to improve their boxing skills. Barrera is the most obvious example, but if you look at Morales, Juan Manuel Marquez, and Fernando Montiel, to name a few, you'll see that Barrera's not alone among Mexicans who have mastered the artistry of the Sweet Science.

Of course, this is not a brand new trend. There have been plenty of great tacticians from South of the Border in the past, such as Hall of Famers Miguel Canto and Salvador Sanchez. But it seems the image of the wade-in banger looking to land his left hook to the liver is fading slightly. Relying on boxing skills can lengthen careers and increase win totals, and at the top level, more fighters are realizing that. Among the four Latinos currently rated in THE RING'S pound-for-pound top 10, three—Barrera, De La Hoya, and Morales—have first-rate technical abilities. Only Nicaragua's Mayorga made it onto the P4P list by putting the emphasis on punching.

Regardless of whether it's a result of increased exposure and opportunity, a deeper pool of fighters created by a greater number of role models, or a true improvement in the ability of the boxers, the trend is undoubtedly real—boxing is inching toward becoming a Latino-dominated sport. But will the trend continue? The natural response is to say yes, as the elements that have created the trend are the sort that should continue to perpetuate themselves. Opportunity and success are bound to breed each other. But HBO's Davis has an interesting take on the matter that suggests the future remains available for any race or ethnicity to grab hold of.

"These things are cyclical," Davis said. "If a true crossover star emerged who was African-American, you'd see more African-American kids get into the sport. There are some stars right now, some great fighters, but there's no Ali or Leonard. Also, it's not just Latinos on the rise. It seems Eastern-Europeans may be the new wave. They're starting to make a stronger impact in the amateurs and the pros.

"It's extremely important for the health of the sport that we grow the other bases while maintaining that strong Latino base. I don't see Latino numbers going down any. But I could see the numbers increasing in other groups. I'm hoping for more Latino stars, and I'm hoping for a star to emerge outside the Latinos."

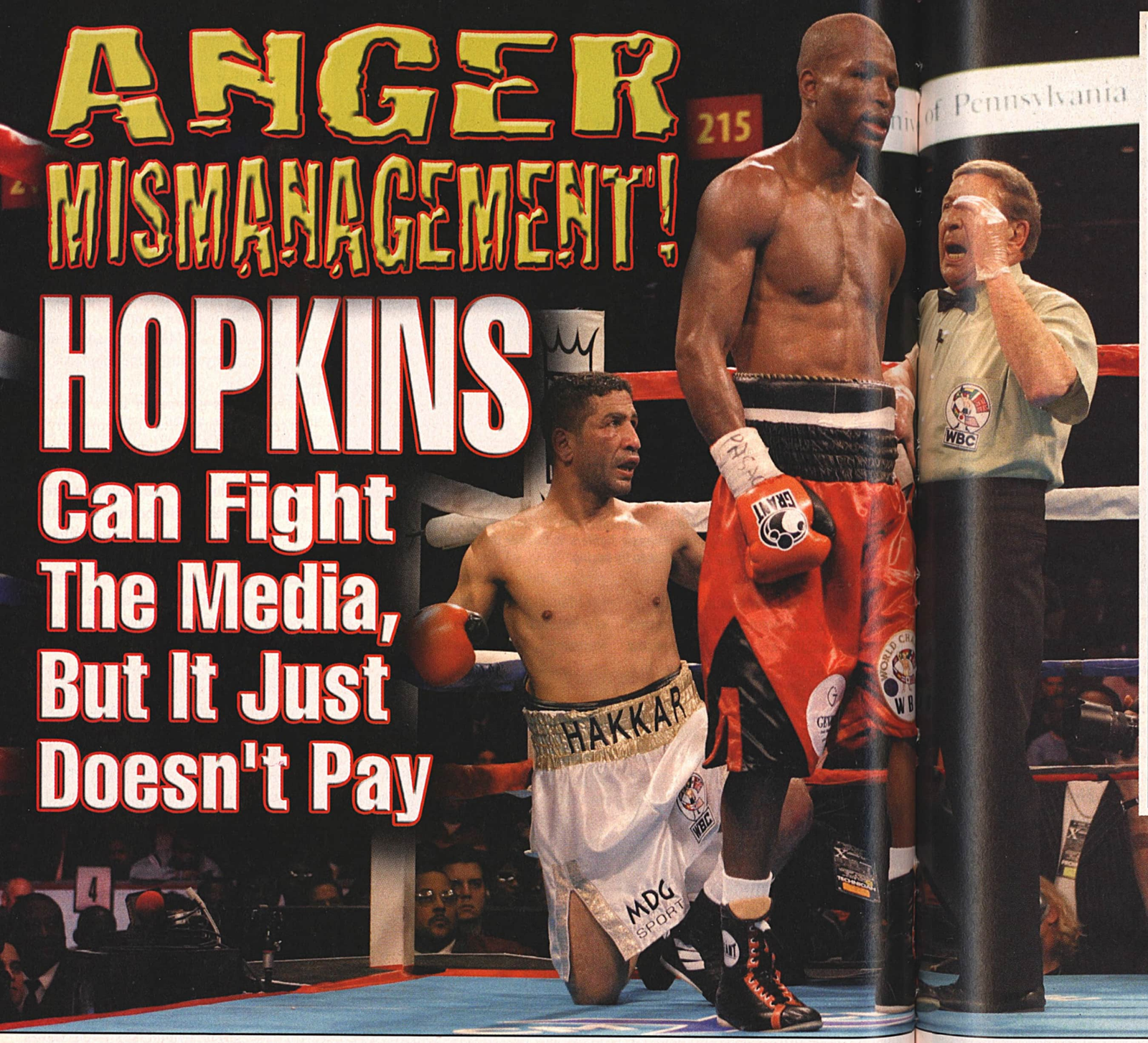
For the time being, though, that non-Latino star, that next great heavyweight specifically, is not visible. And until he appears, it's up to the Latino fighters and fans to carry the sport on their shoulders.

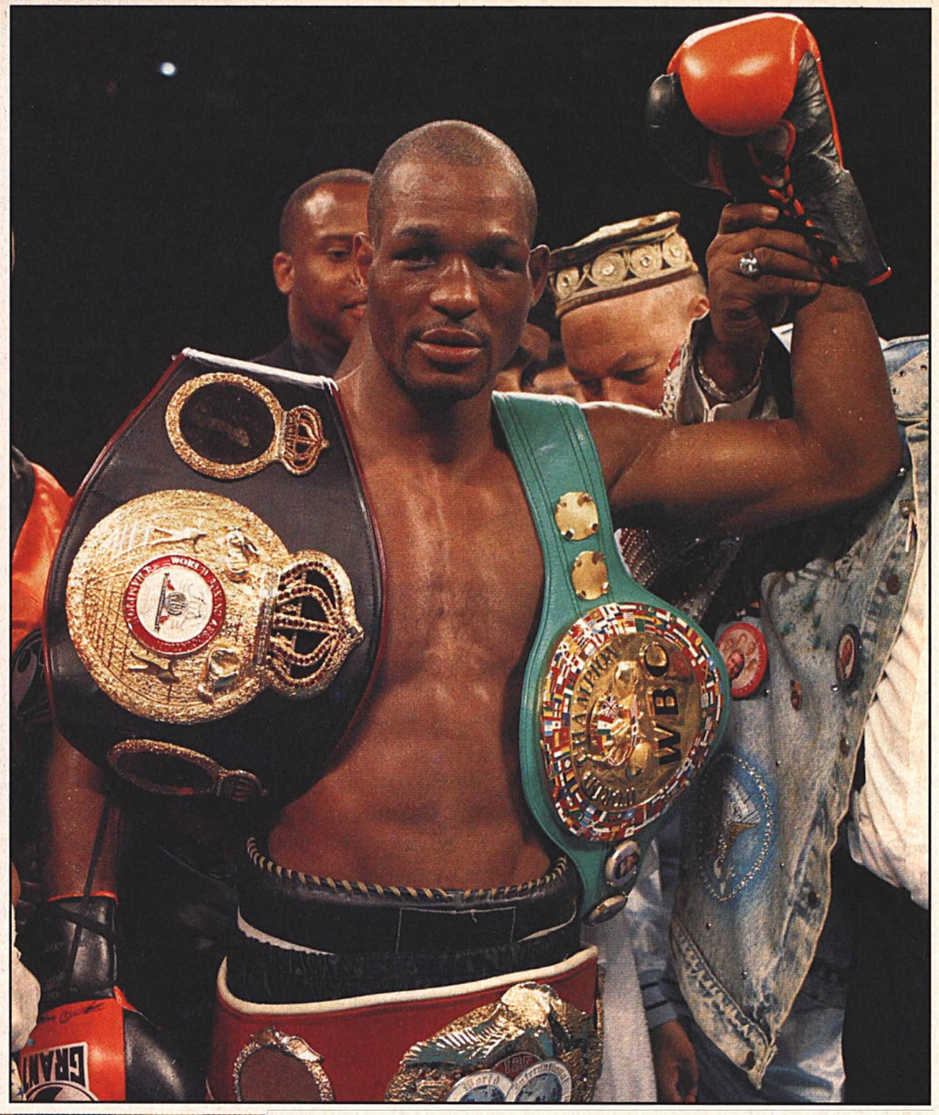
So far, they're doing a fine job. ■

ANGER MISMANAGEMENT!

HOPKINS

Can Fight The Media, But It Just Doesn't Pay





Hopkins' long-awaited homecoming resulted in an easy eighth-round TKO of mismatched challenger Morrade Hakkar. "The Executioner" was unhappy with the criticism he received for fighting such an inept opponent, but at least the middleweight champion was back in action after almost 14 months on the shelf.

By Nigel Collins

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO

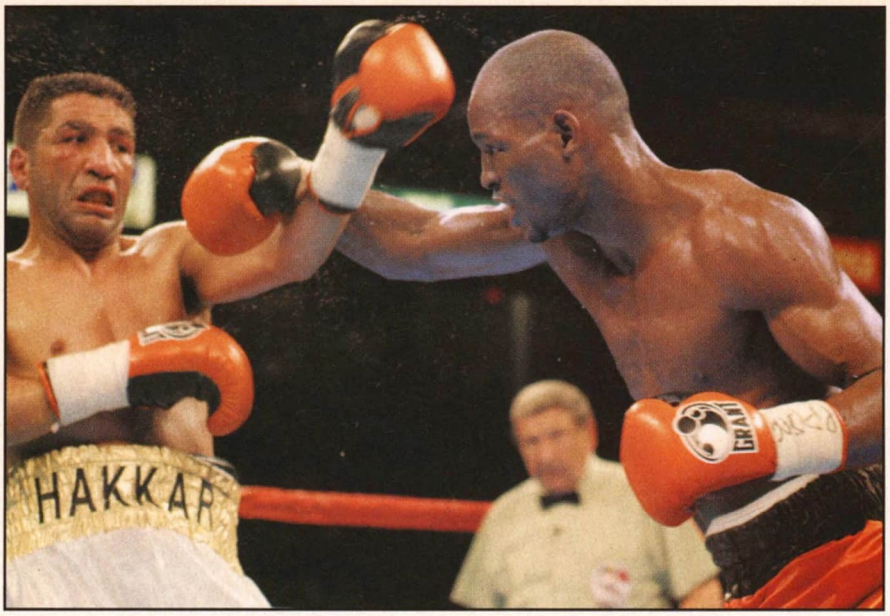
Despite an undemanding victory over unheralded Frenchman Morrade Hakkar, Bernard Hopkins was seething when he arrived at the postfight press conference. He was fresh from an on-air verbal toe-to-toe with HBO's Larry Merchant, but still had enough rancor left to spew venom at various members of the print media.

Merchant had asked him if he was "ashamed" to be fighting such an unworthy challenger, and Hopkins counterattacked far more vigorously than Monsieur Hakkar had earlier that evening. By the time he arrived at the press conference, "The Executioner" had built up a full head of steam and was blindly lashing out at any convenient target.

Hopkins' frustration was understandable up to a point. Things hadn't exactly turned out the way he had always imagined they would when he dreamed of defending the middleweight title in his hometown of Philadelphia. But Hopkins was far from blameless; his obstinacy had played a role in the shabby episode that had just unfolded in front of a sparse crowd at the First Union Spectrum. Not that he was prepared to shoulder any of the responsibility.

Actually, Hopkins' postfight hissy fit was far more entertaining than the 16th successful defense of the middleweight title he'd just tallied, and therein is the crux of his current dilemma. This was not the sort of event THE RING's 2001 Fighter of the Year should have been participating in, especially just two fights removed from the biggest victory of his career. Hopkins knew it, HBO knew it, and so did the Philadelphia fans, most of whom stayed home and watched the mismatch on TV, rather than pay between $50 and $500 to attend what amounted to a high-profile sparring session.

The Hakkar charade aside, the truth is that Hopkins isn't happy unless he's angry, and if there's nothing to be angry about, he'll manufacture something. Anger is as crucial to him as the air he breathes, and is as much a part of his makeup as his jackhammer right cross and snaggletoothed smile. We simply have to accept it and move on, because if anybody thinks they are going to change Hopkins, they are bucking even greater odds than the hapless Hakkar did when he challenged the middleweight champion in late-March.



Hakkar has no answer for Hopkins' educated boxing style and hard-hitting offense, and was on the defensive for most of the bout. How he became number one in the WBC is beyond comprehension.

Although Hopkins pocketed about a million bucks for his night's work, he went home with the same overriding problem he had prior to the fight—the lack of a marquee opponent.

For years Hopkins' holy grail had been a rematch with Roy Jones, the last man to beat him. But when he balked at a $6-million offer last year, Jones moved on (and up in weight) by defeating WBA heavyweight titleholder John Ruiz. The implications of Jones' success as a heavyweight were not lost on Hopkins.

"Roy Jones ran too far for me to catch him," said Hopkins, a career-long middleweight who still makes 160 pounds without struggling.

With Jones out of the picture and no big-name adversary remaining among the middleweights, Hopkins is scanning the 154-pound class in search of an opponent capable of creating at least a modicum of interest. And he may have found one, but not the one he really wants.

Naturally, the junior middle Hopkins would most like to fight is Oscar De La Hoya, but "The Golden Boy" has to get past his rematch with Shane Mosley first. And even if De La Hoya is successful, that doesn't necessarily mean that Hopkins would be next. True, De La Hoya has invoked the Philadelphian's name on numerous occasions when discussing future plans, but he knows it would be prudent to wait until Hopkins has a few more miles on his odometer before risking his handsome hide against a naturally larger man of Hopkins' ability. For the time being, at least, De La Hoya represents a remote goal for Hopkins, not the immediate future.

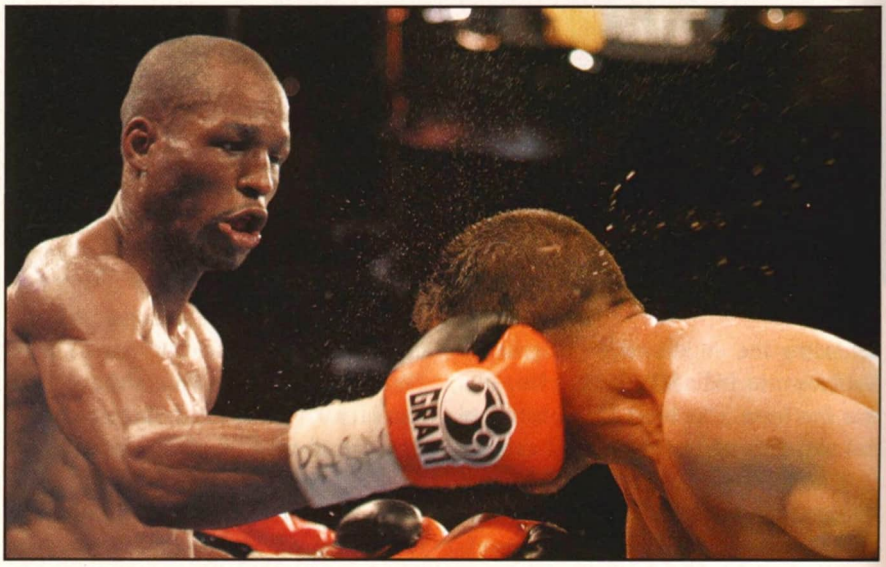
In the meantime, Winky Wright, who is in an even less enviable position than Hopkins, is the most likely candidate to voluntarily place his neck on The Executioner's chopping block. The IBF 154-pound beltholder, who has been repeatedly shunned by De La Hoya, certainly sounds eager to get it on.

"Oscar De La Hoya and his promoter/protector Bob Arum have made it a ritual to challenge those who are way past their prime," said Wright a few days after the Hopkins-Hakkar bout. "They call out Mosley years and pounds after the loss and on the heels of consecutive losses to Forrest. Trinidad gets the call after he loses to Hopkins and is at least two to three weight classes above Oscar. Now they want Bernard Hopkins for the grand finale—when Bernard is 40! Not me. I'll take Bernard on now in his prime, at his weight, and for his titles. If Oscar won't give me a shot at being the undisputed junior middleweight champion, I know Bernard is man enough to give me the shot for his undisputed title."

But while Hopkins-Wright is an intriguing match, it's far from a superfight, and Hopkins has also called out both Fernando Vargas and Shane Mosley. But that's just wishful thinking. Vargas is still rebuilding following his brutal kayo loss to De La Hoya, and Mosley is fighting Oscar.

Back in the days when he was defending the IBF belt on ESPN for chump change, Hopkins used to talk about being content to pick up enough crumbs to make a cake. It was pragmatic thinking back then, and now he sees his collection of alphabet belts as a safety net, something to fall back on in times of tribulation.

"To give up any of my belts would be like taking a shotgun and shooting



Hopkins had no difficulty landing powerpunches, but never pressed too hard for a quick finish. On several occasions, he turned and walked away after drilling the Frenchman with a solid punch.

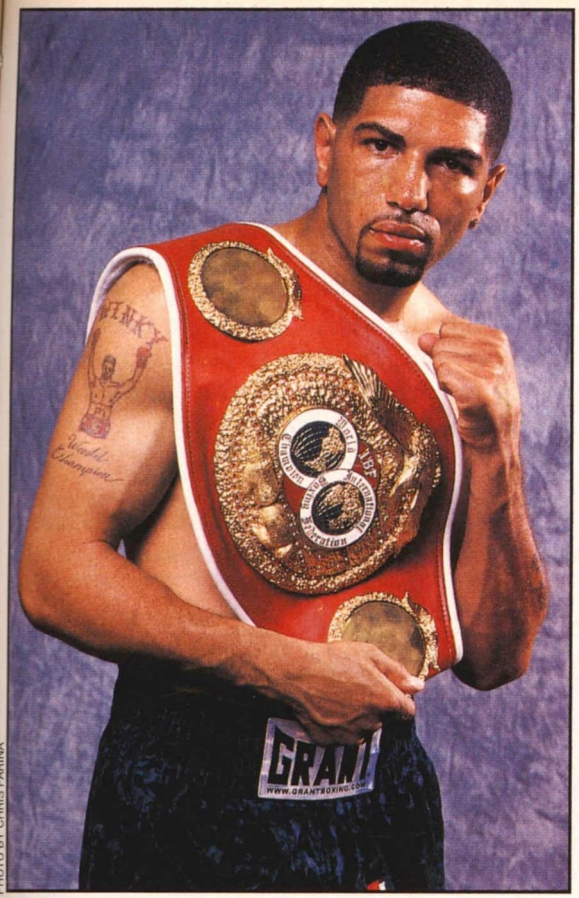


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Most likely, Hopkins' next challenger will be IBF junior middleweight titleholder Winky Wright (pictured), who launched a campaign to fight Hopkins in the immediate aftermath of the Hakkar fight. It's also a match HBO would buy.

my own foot off," Hopkins said. "If I'm not getting big fights with three belts, how am I going to get them if I give any of my belts away?"

The problem with placating the alphabet gangs, of course, is that they repeatedly elevate unworthy fighters to mandatory positions. Prior to getting hammered by Hopkins, the woefully inadequate Hakkar was the WBC's top dog, while the IBF is currently pushing Robert Allen, whom Hopkins thrashed in no uncertain terms in February '99. The WBA, meanwhile, has its ludicrous two-tier championship policy, with Hopkins as "super champion," William Joppy as plain old "champion," and a vacancy at number one.

If he could get away with it, Hopkins would love to take the same route that Jones traveled as undisputed light heavyweight champion, which in Jones' case generally meant HBO money for ESPN-quality fights. But Jones had a sweetheart deal with the cable giant, one that he shamelessly milked for all it was worth. Hopkins has no such contract, and HBO would not have bought the Hakkar fight if Don King hadn't packaged it as part of a doubleheader along with the Hasim Rahman-David Tua rematch.

Judging by the comments made by HBO exec Kery Davis following the Hakkar fight, Hopkins can forget the same sort of free ride Jones enjoyed.

"This was an embarrassing mismatch in terms of a mandatory," Davis told the *Philadelphia Daily News*. "This is why we hate to do mandatories. We wanted to get Bernard a bigger name, but this is the guy he wanted to fight. [Televising] this was the only way we could move forward in terms of his career. We hope we're beyond that now."

If you get the impression that everybody is passing the buck, you'd be right. The WBC, HBO, and Hopkins must all share in the blame for the Hakkar travesty. But the circumstances that brought Hopkins to this sorry state of affairs are entirely of his own making. He could have taken the Jones fight, or the three-fight package Showtime offered. And if fighting in Philadelphia was as important to him as he claimed, why didn't he give his hometown fans a match that actually meant something? Had, for instance, fellow Philadelphian Charles Brewer been in the other corner, there would surely have been twice as many customers in the house. But honoring a pointless mandatory obviously took precedent over creative matchmaking.

There have, of course, been other outside-of-the-ring headaches for Hopkins since the Trinidad fight. But while ditching long-serving trainer Bouie Fisher and adviser Lou DiBella has turned some people against Hopkins, fans typically don't get anywhere

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near as worked up about fighters firing various members of their camp as the media does. If they did, De La Hoya wouldn't be the sport's biggest attraction outside of the heavyweight division. Bad matches, on the other hand, are a total turn-off, a fact that Jones finally had to come to grips with when alienated consumers organized a Roy-cott prior to several of his pay-per-view fights.

The best news for Hopkins is that those peaches he likes to compare himself to are still as fresh as the day grandma bottled them and put them on the shelf. The amazing 38-year-old doesn't seem to have lost a thing during the almost 14 months that passed between the Hakkar fight and his previous outing, a 10th-round TKO of Carl Daniels in February 2002. Hopkins is as unique a fighter as he is a personality, and he's always dedicated himself to training with the same fanatical zeal that has allowed him to persevere for so long against such unfavorable circumstances.

Merchant said he thought Hopkins was slipping. But there was no evidence of that against Hakkar. Sure, there was a trace of rust, and the champ missed badly with a couple of wild swings. But for the most part, he was on his game, light of foot, quick of hand, and oh so slick.

Hopkins is one of the very last of the old-school fighters, someone who has completely mastered every nuance of his trade, and when he's gone, it's unlikely we'll ever see his like again. For this reason, if for no other, let's hope some meaningful matches can be made for this very special fighter before those peaches eventually rot. ■

FRENCHY FRIED

Things began to go badly for Morrade Hakkar even before the opening bell rang for his bout with Bernard Hopkins. As the 31-year-old challenger entered the ring, his handlers tossed T-shirts into the crowd, but the gesture backfired when some of Hopkins' faithful hurled them back.

Once the fight started, however, it wasn't cotton T-shirts flying in Hakkar's direction; it was leather-encased fists, and all things considered, he was lucky to last as long as he did.

Hakkar, 159, was so spooked the first round, it would have been funny if it wasn't so pathetic. He threw himself into reverse gear and retreated at such a rapid clip, he was in danger of bumping into himself. Marcel Cerdan must have been spinning in his grave.

Hakkar managed to calm down by the start of the second, at which point Hopkins, 158½, began to dish out a methodical beating. He took his time tracking down Hakkar, steadily cutting off the ring, and landing sharp, punishing blows whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Those hoping for a quick blowout were surely disappointed, but the protracted nature of the bout, combined with Hakkar's ineptitude, allowed Hopkins to demonstrate some of the finer points of his art. He ducked low under punches, pivoted out of corners and off the ropes, and countered with precision. His left jab smacked into Hakkar's face, his straight right thudded home with neck-wrenching power, and his left hook dug painfully into the Frenchman's flanks.

Yet despite his rabbit-like retreat in the first round, Hakkar, 30-4 (18), was not without courage, and he sponged up quite a beating before his ordeal was over. He went down in the sixth, a delayed reaction to a flush right that Hopkins had landed a few seconds earlier, but got up and soldiered on.

To an extent, Hopkins seemed to be playing with Hakkar, and on several occasions, the champion turned and walked away after landing a good shot. A cluster of body blows put Hakkar down again in the seventh, but as Hopkins helped his foe's fall by pushing down on his neck, referee Frank Cappuccino (USA) didn't count it as an official knockdown. Later in the round, a right to the chin decked Hakkar again, but as he was standing on a wet part of the canvas at the time, Cappuccino ruled that it was a slip, a highly questionable call considering how cleanly the punch connected.

Cappuccino blew another knockdown in the eighth, when Hakkar's glove brushed the canvas after he absorbed a right to the body. But by then the challenger was all but finished, and his corner wisely stopped the fight at the end of the round to spare him further abuse.

"He figured he could run, run, run, and maybe get lucky," said Hopkins, after raising his record to 42-2-1 (31). "But I was going to dog him until I got him."

There was never any doubt about that, and providing Hopkins doesn't wait another 14 months before fighting again, the rounds will pay dividends the next time. Still, there's no way the fight will be remembered as one of the more glorious chapters in Hopkins' career.

Don King claimed he didn't know how many people were in attendance, but at best there were maybe 5,000 souls scattered throughout the 16,000-seat arena, and how many of them actually paid is anybody's guess.

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Hakkar reels after fielding a right from Hopkins

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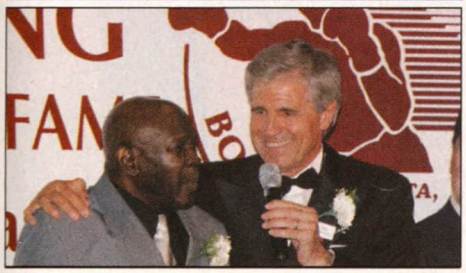

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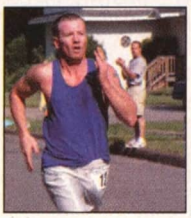

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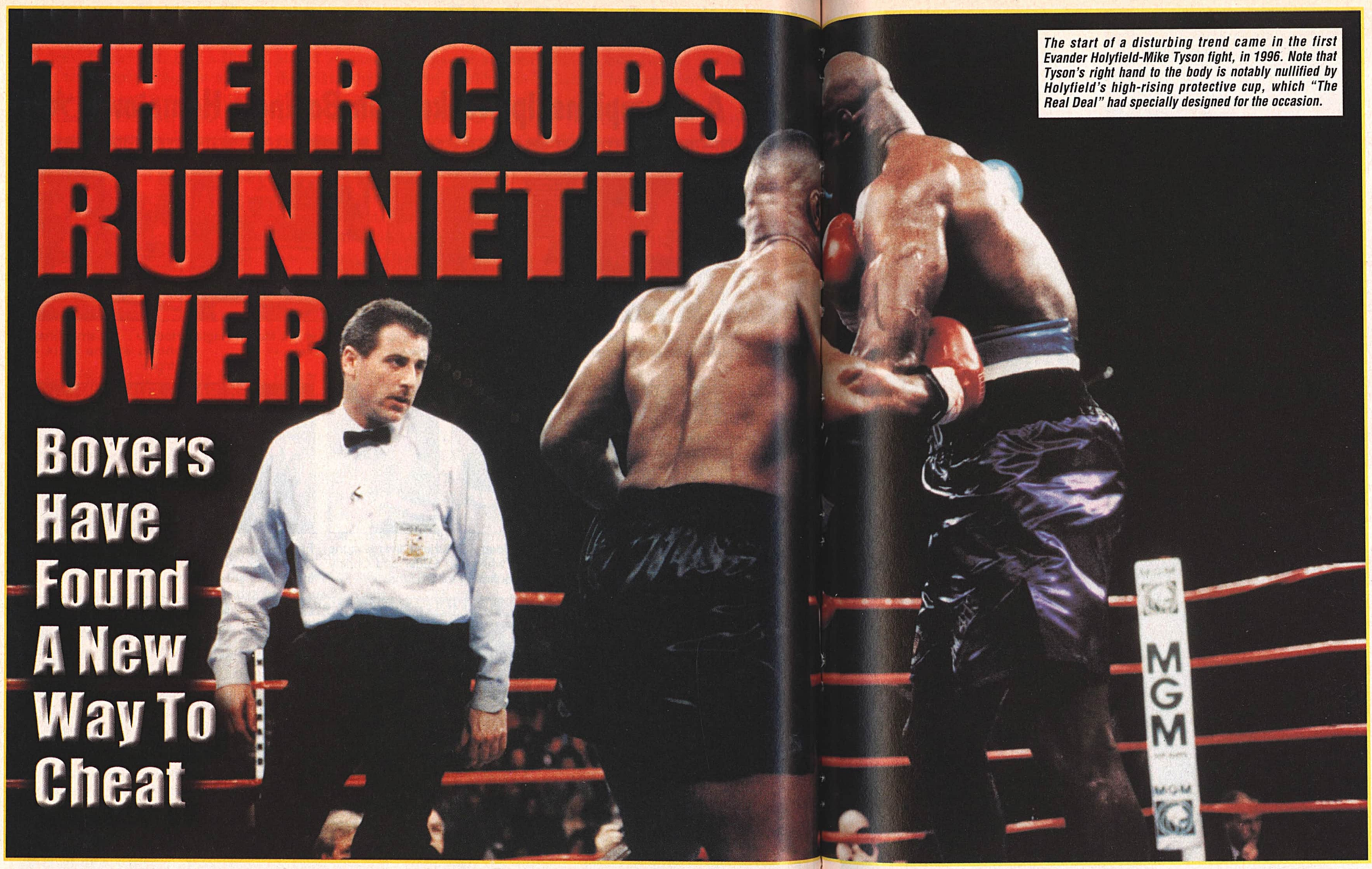
THEIR CUPS RUNNETH OVER

Boxers Have Found A New Way To Cheat



The start of a disturbing trend came in the first Evander Holyfield-Mike Tyson fight, in 1996. Note that Tyson's right hand to the body is notably nullified by Holyfield's high-rising protective cup, which "The Real Deal" had specially designed for the occasion.

By David Mayo

Heart and talent made Evander Holyfield one of the greatest fighters of his generation, but let us not overlook shrewdness and cunning, either. Seven years ago, as the first of his two battles with Mike Tyson approached, prohibitive underdog Holyfield—pretty much written off as championship material following his brutal trilogy with Riddick Bowe and loss to Michael Moorer—devised a unique plan.

Holyfield went to his equipment manufacturer, Grant Boxing, with a plot to develop a protective cup with a beltline that rode up a bit higher than the standard-sized cup. Whether Holyfield intentionally surmised that such a belt would give him greater protection against bodyshots, we can only guess. But Holyfield won that fight on a knockout, handing Tyson his second career loss, and unwittingly created a boxing phenomenon in the process.

Today, the impact of that revolutionary design change may be discovered simply by flipping through the pages of your boxing magazines. See there? Michael Grant is a serial offender. Bernard Hopkins' belt obscures his abdomen. Lennox Lewis, Vernon Forrest, Marco Antonio Barrera, Vivian Harris—it seems virtually everybody who is anybody in boxing is wearing a protective belt that rises well above the traditional navel-to-hips guideline.

"It started in 1996," said Grant Elvis Phillips, founder of Grant Boxing. "We came out with a foul-protector cup that was a little higher than any other cup and it became famous through guys like Evander Holyfield and Michael Grant. As with many things in boxing equipment, the cup has evolved, and we were the pioneers in that type of equipment. Reyes and Everlast followed. It spread through the heavyweights. Then, Bernard Hopkins wanted a higher cup, and over time it spread throughout the weight divisions."

So three years after Holyfield debuted the new beltline for his epic 1996 knockout of Tyson, who do you think was the first documented big-name fighter to lodge a preemptive complaint against an opponent for wearing precisely such a belt?

You guessed it.

"There had been some concern after the first Evander-Lennox fight in New York over the level of Lennox's belt," said Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission. "Before the rematch in Las Vegas, there was a complaint lodged by the Holyfield people. For the second fight, Lennox came in with a regular cup that came up around the navel."

Referees have made adjustments over the years regarding boxing's waistline evolution. It has become more common than ever to hear a referee's prefight instructions include a specific delineation regarding the cutoff point between legal and illegal blows when fighters wear unusually high cups.

But that allowance creates residual issues that cut to the spirit of the rules. While a beltline blow may be regarded as legal, and allowed as such, the protective cup has become a more useful piece of equipment than originally designed. It has become a buffer for legal bodyshots.

"Here's the real issue here: The cup is only supposed to protect the groin, and your groin is not above your belly button," said Larry Hazzard, New Jersey's commission chairman. "That's the approach I would take if we ever address this as a major concern that we should resolve as a boxing community. The midsection is not supposed to be protected by equipment. I don't have any problem with a belt that runs to the top of the hips, because anything below that is illegal anyway. But not these big belts that come up way over the level of the trunks. The only purpose for those, in my opinion, is to absorb bodyblows.

"If it has become a real problem in boxing, I think the entire boxing community has to address it globally. We can't just address it in one commission, then allow fighters to hedge on different rules as they go state to state."

The rules, however, are a significant part of the problem. Nevada, the most powerful boxing jurisdiction in the world, has no specific rule regarding the legal level of a protective cup, Ratner said. Neither does New Jersey. Neither does Missouri, where Tim Lueckenhoff, president of the Association of Boxing Commissions, is the commission director.

"Although we haven't had much problem with it in Missouri, it's an interesting question and probably something we should address in our administrative rules," Lueckenhoff said. "These high-rise belts are getting more common, although the average fan probably isn't aware of it, unless a television commentator makes a specific reference to it. But the media are getting involved in it a little more lately, and that brings awareness to the subject.

Lennox Lewis' cup was almost up around his armpits for his controversial first fight with Holyfield (above), but when Holyfield's camp complained about it prior to the rematch in Las Vegas, Lewis switched to a more conventional model (below).

At the ABC meeting this summer, we're going to re-do our Regulatory Guidelines, which are for states with no boxing commissions. I'm going to put that on my list of topics to address."

Hazzard guessed there is a simple reason why many of the nation's most powerful boxing bodies fail to address the legal level of protective beltlines in their rules.

"I'm sure, at the very beginning when the rules were developed, that fighters were wearing cups of standard nature that fell within the guidelines," Hazzard said. "The problem is the creativity of the fighters and their respective camps. That's how it becomes a problem. I remember one fight, involving Michael Grant, where there was some question about how high his cup was, and the rationale they gave was that he's a tall guy and that's the way his body is structured. It was a creative answer."

Pennsylvania does have a specific rule outlining the traditional navel-to-hips beltline, although it also is home to one of the sport's most significant offenders, mid-

Michael Grant was among the first to wear the high-rise protector, as is plainly illustrated in this photo of his TKO of David Izon in 1998. Maybe Grant learned about it from his old pal, Holyfield.

dleweight champion Hopkins of Philadelphia.

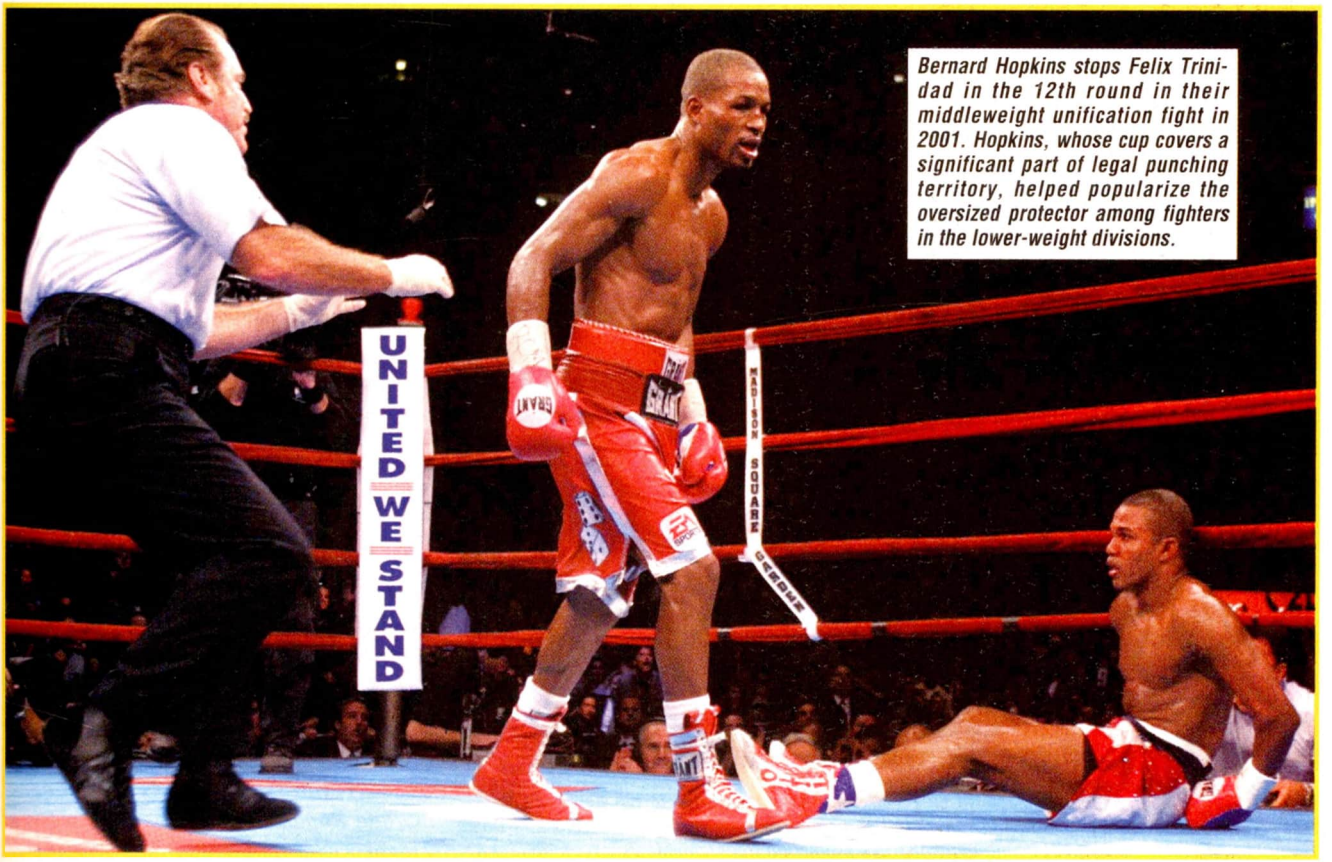
Greg Sirb, past president of the ABC and executive director of the Pennsylvania Athletic Commission, said he only recalls a couple of occasions, involving minor bouts, when a boxer was warned before a fight that his cup did not meet guidelines. Sirb acknowledged the commission is reluctant to circumvent a referee's authority regarding equipment matters.

"We try to give as much discretion to the referee as we can in checking the mouthpiece, the gloves, the cup," he said. "It gets to be a little subjective, especially when you're dealing with someone the size of Lennox Lewis, who has to have his protective equipment specially made. But the purpose of the cup is just to protect fighters from illegal blows—not to protect them from rib shots.

"I've noticed over the years that the belt lines are getting higher and higher. I don't think there's any doubt about that. I'm going to bring it up at the ABC meeting in July. We have to at least start putting it in all the commissions' minds that they've got to start looking at it and enforcing the rule. Sometimes all it takes is getting the commissions to start thinking about it, and it will change."

While every major fighter seems to be wearing higher protective cups, longtime promoter and matchmaker Mike Acri said he has noticed two groups in particular that are more likely to use them: "Guys who can't take it to the body, and guys who don't do their sit-ups."

"I've seen fat guys, who were a little embarrassed about their body, wear their cups higher," Acri said. "Complaining about the level of a belt before a fight is really an issue for trainers. By the time the show begins, my work is pretty much done. But I do remember I had a beef on a club show in Ohio five or six years ago. I



Bernard Hopkins stops Felix Trinidad in the 12th round in their middleweight unification fight in 2001. Hopkins, whose cup covers a significant part of legal punching territory, helped popularize the oversized protector among fighters in the lower-weight divisions.

can't even remember who the fighter was. But the cup looked like it was up to his nipples."

If Paulie Ayala ever had succumbed to Johnny Tapia while pondering the meaning of life for 12 rounds, he might have had an excuse. Tapia commonly wears his belt so high that the word "Vida" (Spanish for "life") is the only clearly visible word in his semicircular belly tattoo that reads, "Mi Vida Loca." It never affected Ayala, who scored victories over Tapia in 1999 and 2000.

"He wears his trunks pretty high, and he wears his cup even higher," Ayala said of Tapia. "A lot of fighters tend to do that in order to protect their body more. All they do is basically give you a slap on the hand for it. The referee will just tell you, 'This is a legal blow; this is not.' That's why fighters continue to do it. I was watching Tim Austin's last fight, and I noticed he has a high belt, and the referee was calling all those shots on the belt low. That's another reason fighters wear the high belts, to get low blows called against the other guy."

In other words, it's legal cheating, and an entire generation is taking advantage of it. After all, you don't want to be the only guy in the ring absorbing the full brunt of bodyshots when an opponent has a padded leather strip cushioning similar shots to his own midsection.

"There have been times when the issue has come up," Ratner acknowledged. "In the Oscar De La Hoya-Fernando Vargas fight, there were complaints about De La Hoya's cup. It's never been a big problem in Nevada, but you have to be aware that some fighters are great bodypunchers and you don't want to take that away from them. We want to keep the belt around the navel. We don't want it around the ribs. The onus is on the commission to make sure there's not an advantage. Our whole goal is to level the playing field."

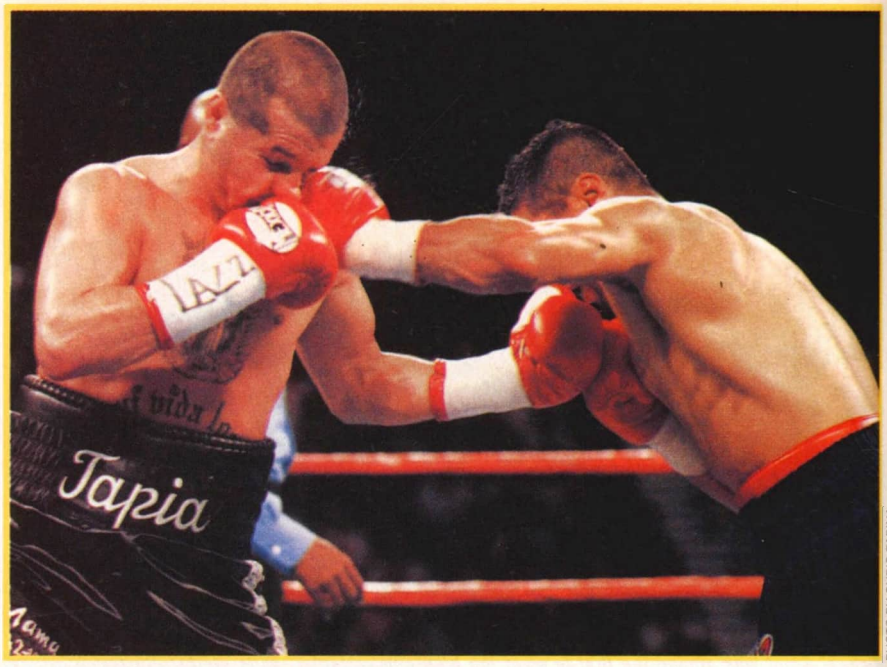


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Paulie Ayala, driving a left into Johnny Tapia's face during their second fight, says that fighters like Tapia will continue to wear high-rise protectors unless the boxing commissions crack down hard on the guilty parties. Notice how much of Tapia's "Mi Vida Loca" tattoo is covered up.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Referee Joe Cortez questioned Oscar De La Hoya's protective cup prior to the Fernando Vargas fight last September, but as Vargas' people didn't complain, nothing was done about it and De La Hoya, who prevailed in the 11th round, enjoyed extra protection from bodyblows.

De La Hoya, who was fighting at junior middleweight for only the second time when he stepped into the ring against Vargas, apparently was keenly aware what he was doing. But after the disclosure of Vargas' steroid-laced drug test, the height of De La Hoya's belt turned out to be a minimal violation by comparison, if indeed a violation at all.

"The referee [Joe Cortez] did come into the dressing room before the fight and asked about the cup," said Floyd Mayweather Sr., De La Hoya's trainer. "But nobody from the other side ever questioned it. And of course we weren't going to question it."

It's high time someone questioned these high belts, though. Bodypunching already is an increasingly lost art with many professionals. As long as fighters are allowed to run afoul of the spirit of the rules, whether or not they actually are breaking a written rule, the levels at which they wear their protective belts will continue to minimize the effectiveness of bodypunching—and alter the sport in the process.

"Fighters try to take every advantage they can possibly get," Ayala said. "If they don't prevent you from doing that, and if they continue to just give you a slap on the wrist, fighters will continue to do it." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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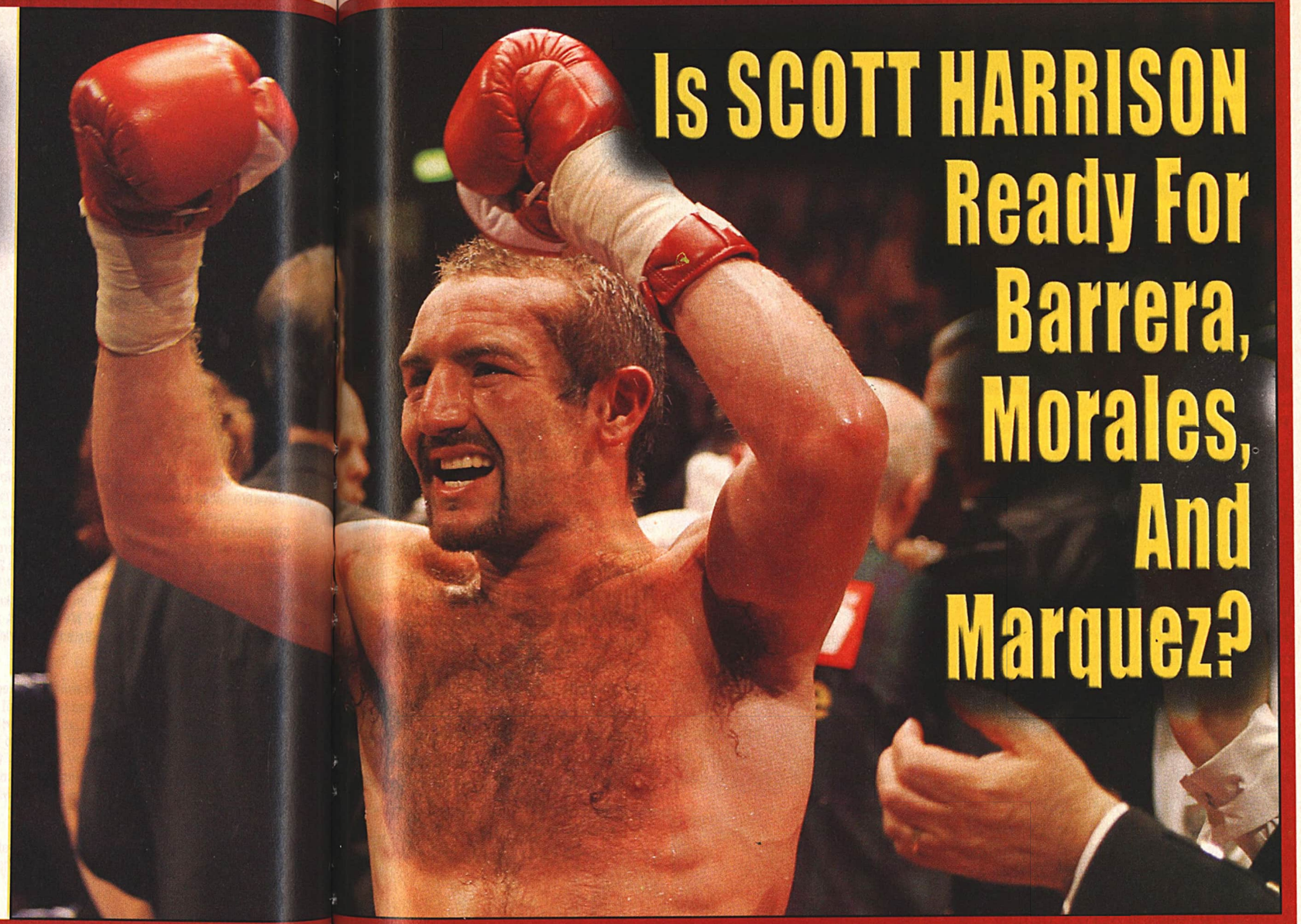
HUNTING FOR THE THREE AMIGOS



Is SCOTT HARRISON Ready For Barrera, Morales, And Marquez?

By Brian Doogan

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Scott Harrison vs. Wayne McCullough promised to be one of the fights of the year in Britain, a throwback contest, a battle of attrition pitting an up-and-coming prospect against a proven warrior. But it wasn't to be. What transpired was unexpected–most observers anticipating a contest that might go either way–but there was plenty proved during the 12 rounds by both men.

In a coming-of-age fight for the 25-year-old from Cambuslang on the outskirts of Glasgow, Harrison out-warred the former WBC bantamweight titlist from Belfast, Northern Ireland, who established yet again his right to be known as one of the bravest men ever to lace up the gloves. The amount of blows he walked through at the Braehead Arena emphasized that.

According to the punch counters, Harrison landed 398 shots, nearly twice as many as the 209 landed by McCullough. The scores of the judges were similarly lopsided, as Mickey Vann tallied 119-108, Andre van Grootenbreul scored 119-109, and Dr. Ruben Garcia saw it a 120-108 shutout.

"He's a brave fighter. I didn't expect him to be as strong or resilient as he was," admitted Harrison. "I told him to drop down to super bantamweight and he'll be a world champion."

But for all of the 32-year-old Irishman's awesome reserves of courage, the night of March 22 belonged to Harrison. His victory last October over Argentina's Julio Pablo Chacon for the WBO featherweight title once held by Naseem Hamed was a steppingstone toward the big names in the 126-pound division. McCullough represented the most severe examination of his gifts as a fighter that he had ever faced, and the comprehensive nature of his win places Harrison firmly in the sights of Marco Antonio Barrera—Hamed's conqueror and the recognized ruler of the world's featherweights—as well as Erik Morales and Juan Manuel Marquez, Barrera's Mexican compatriots.

"These are the fighters I'd now like to face," declared Harrison, whose promoter, Frank Warren, plans to set up one of these fights by the end of the year.

Frank Maloney, Harrison's manager, is adamant that his man has everything it will take to emerge dominant in his domain. "Scott will be regarded as one of the finest fighters ever to come out of Britain by the time he's finished," predicted Maloney. "I'm convinced of that."

His most formidable asset is his physical strength. Between the weigh-in at 4 p.m. on Friday and the first bell at 9 p.m. Saturday, Harrison appeared to have put on an astonishing 17 to 20 pounds and two inches around his waist. The shape of his shoulders and arms and the size of his chest made it a distinctly uneven physical contest. McCullough, who stands the same height as Harrison at 5'7", looked two divisions smaller than his opponent, who was possibly a full-fledged welterweight by fight time. Against any featherweight fighter, Harrison would enjoy this kind of physical superiority, and the effect of it is formidable.

"I've been in the ring with Naseem Hamed, who was recognized as the strongest puncher in maybe the whole history of the featherweight division, a guy with freakish strength," McCullough reflected. "I also fought Erik Morales, another terrifically strong guy who had stopped every single fighter he had faced in a championship fight before me. Morales admitted later that he felt like quitting during our fight.

"But Harrison was like a wall, just like a wall. His strength was absolutely unbelievable. That was the thing I found impossible to overcome, his strength. It was phenomenal."

Barrera has adapted his style through time from an almost archetypal Mexican slugger to the kind of clever boxer who was able to thoroughly dismantle Hamed.

Harrison rained one vicious right hand after another on McCullough, thoroughly dominating their 12-round bout at Braehead Arena in Glasgow, Scotland. It was by far the most significant victory of the 25-year-old Harrison's career.

Barrera's boxing could be Harrison's undoing.

"All fighters are good at some things and not so good at others," agreed Jim Watt, Scotland's former WBC lightweight king who watched his countryman comprehensively outpoint McCullough from the studio of British broadcaster Sky Sports, with whom he now works as an analyst. "I think Scott would have problems with clever, shifty opponents who won't stand their ground. But so far in his career, we haven't seen him have any major problems. He has coped with every opponent they've put him in against. He has a good all-round style; he's learned the basics and he's built on them."

His only defeat in 21 fights came in his fourth professional bout, against Miguel Matthews of Wales. Harrison was cut by a clash of heads, and, under English rules, lost on a TKO in a fight that would have been declared a no-contest in America. Harrison drew over six rounds in his next fight—a bout against Frenchman Stephane Fernandez in France—but has won 16 without hiccup since.

"He's done it the right way, the old-fashioned way, winning the British title, the Commonwealth title, and then establishing himself as a championship-caliber fighter," Watt added. "I don't think Scott's far away from his peak now. He's big and strong, and in the next few years, I think he'll be massive."

Massive in another sense, too, because he seems certain to outgrow the featherweight division, just as Morales appears to be doing.

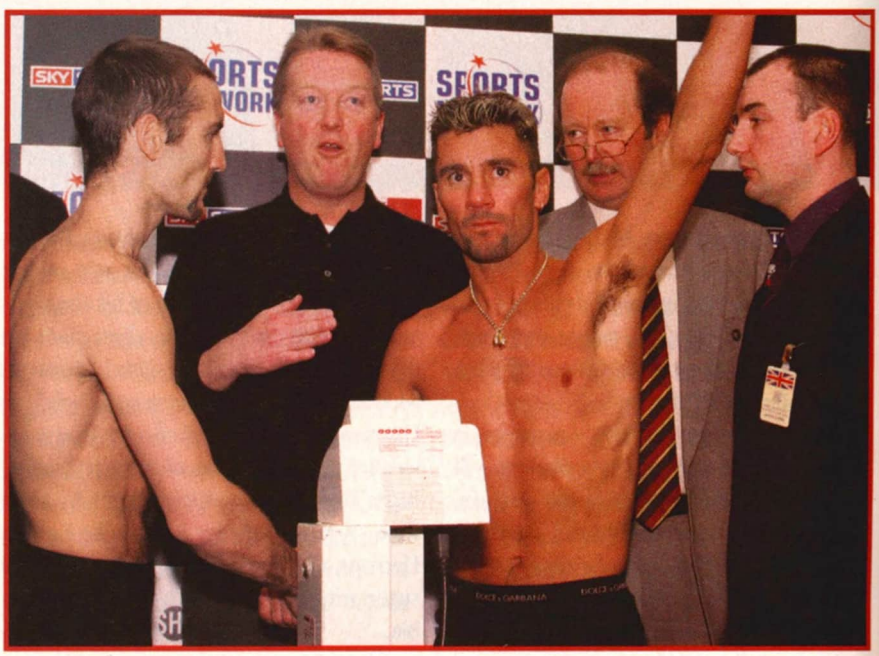
"Bob Arum has spoken about a fight between Scott and Morales before the end of the year, and it's a match I'd love to make," said Warren. "Scott's got good boxing ability and showed that against McCullough and he'd demonstrate it against Morales, who's a good boxer, too. But the strength factor would be significant. I think he holds a strength advantage against anyone in the world at his weight, and I include Morales in that."

Marquez looked devastating in his IBF title-winning effort against another Mexican, Manuel Medina, in February, and Harrison would need all his strength if this match was made.

"Scott's very dedicated, and when he comes to camp, he is focused on only the fight and his opponent, and that's the way he's always been," said Peter Harrison, who trains his son in the Phoenix Gym in Glasgow. "I would have no problem with Scott going in against anybody—Barrera, Morales, Marquez—and neither would he. In fact, he'd welcome any of those fights now. They're the fights he wants and he's ready for them."

It was clear from the moment Harrison began to trade with McCullough that the heavy artillery belonged to the Scottish fighter, and he launched it with full force. The most significant breakthrough of the opening round came in the final minute, when Harrison landed a left hook and overhand right followed by another good straight right. McCullough danced a jig to show the champion that he was unhurt and mouthed through his gum shield, "Ain't so bad." But it was indicative of what was to come.

The jab was also an effective weapon for the Scot, but McCullough managed to avoid many of the titleholder's powershots in the second round, and one good counter right underlined "The Pocket Rocket's" will for the fight. What he had, too, was all the guile he amassed under the tutelage of his teacher, the late Eddie Futch, and he put it to good use, for if he had been unable to slip the punches he did, it might have proved impossible even for him to persuade referee John Coyle to allow him to finish the fight. When Coyle looked poised to intervene at one point in the eighth round, McCullough



While the fighters were only three-quarters of a pound apart at the official weigh-in, by fight time, Harrison appeared two divisions larger than McCullough. The Scot's size and strength are key advantages that he will hold over just about any featherweight in the world.

As always, McCullough was extremely game in defeat and never stopped trying. In the late rounds, however, he was taking a dangerous beating, and a stoppage in Harrison's favor would have been easy to justify.

retaliated with gusto and eluded the shots that may have proved conclusive.

"The eighth round was my worst, but at no point in that round did it reach the stage where Harrison had me pinned on the ropes and was nailing me with six or seven punches in rapid succession," McCullough declared. "He got through with punches, yes, but it would be one big shot and then a break, another big shot and I'd make him miss and hit him back. My legs stayed strong."

But Harrison's blows were damaging enough. A grotesquely swollen left ear, a painful result of being cuffed by the inside of Harrison's right glove, made it even more difficult for McCullough, whose left eye also became swollen. McCullough, 26-4 (17), still has never been stopped nor even knocked down in his long career, but Harrison, 19-1-1 (9), came closer than any other foe—including Hamed and Morales—to forcing an early finish. That he was so dominant in a fight that appeared so competitive on paper was what made this a breakthrough fight for the young Scot. His name is now rightfully being considered for the big fights against the best and most famous featherweights in the world.

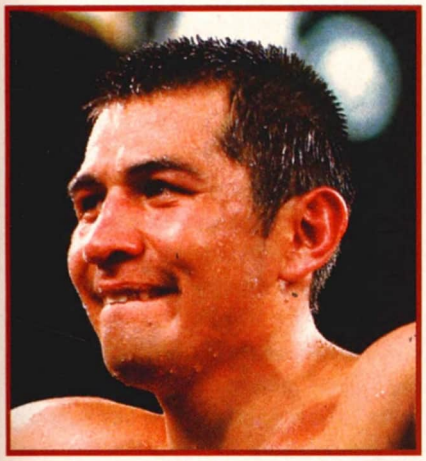
One such 126-pounder, Johnny Tapia, was ringside in Glasgow. Despite his loss to Barrera last year, Tapia is looking for another big fight.

"I'd love to fight Scott or Wayne," he said. "They're my type of fighter."

Indeed, they're every fight fan's type of fighter. But if Tapia—or Barrera, Morales, or Marquez, for that matter—is looking for a competitive fight, Harrison can certainly give them that, and maybe a bit more, too. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S European correspondent.

Harrison was too much for the aging McCullough in every way—too strong, too skilled, too busy. "He has a good all-round style, he's learned the basics and he's built on them," said Scottish broadcaster Jim Watt, the former WBC lightweight titleholder.



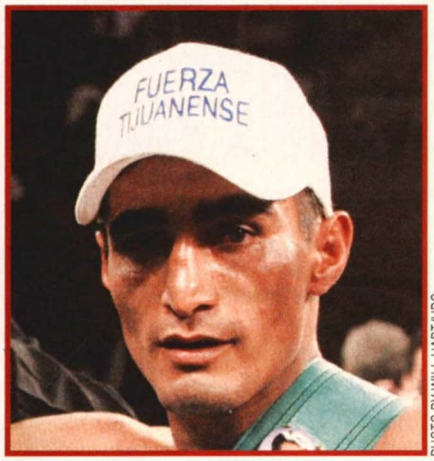


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

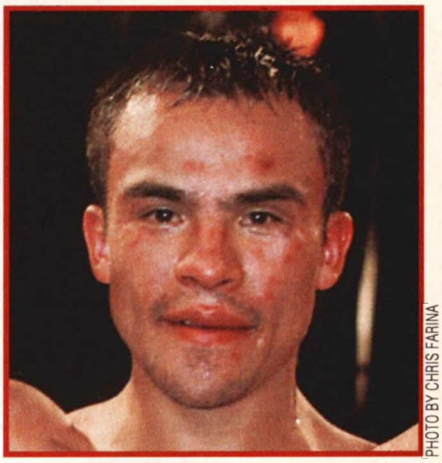
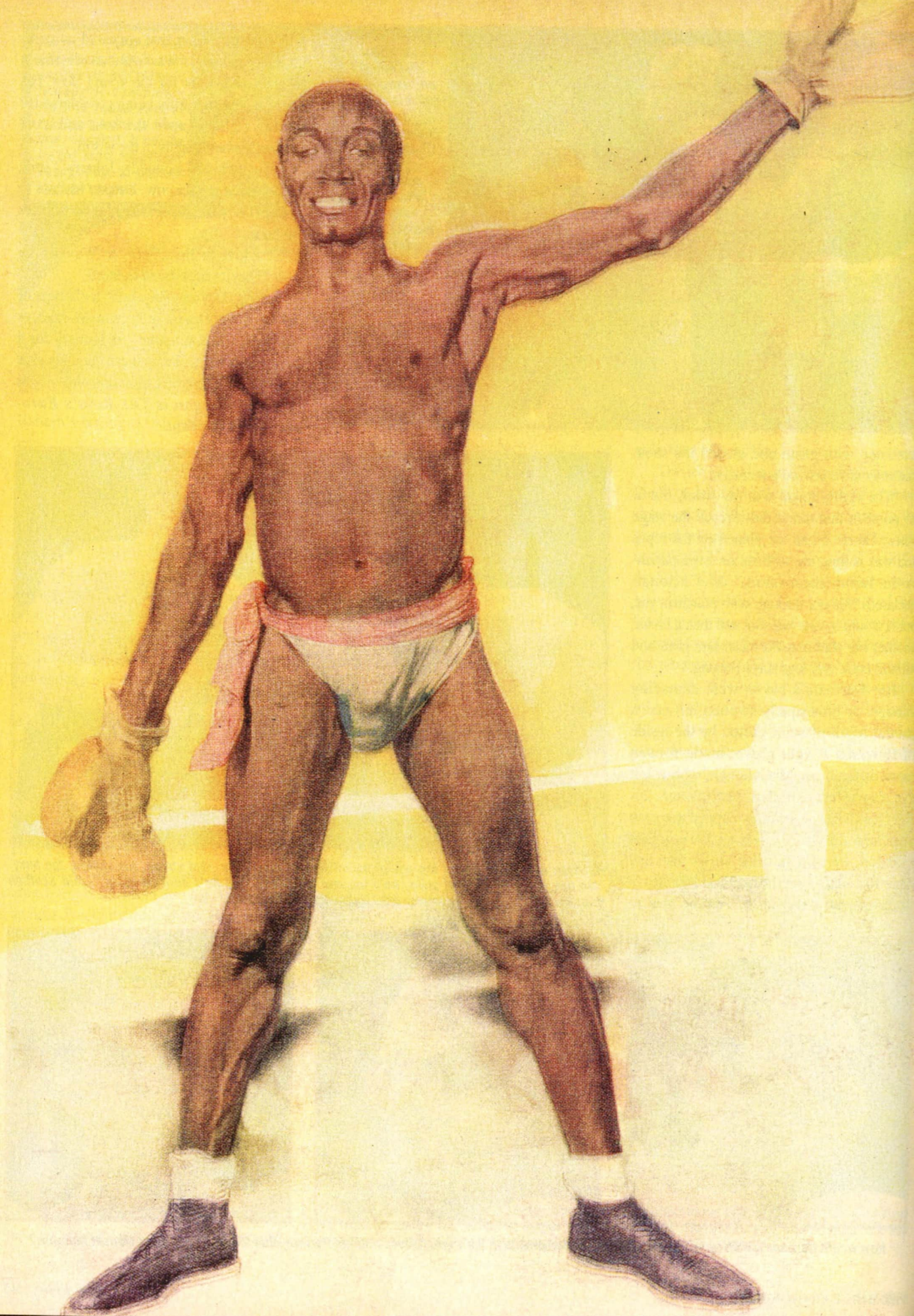


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

How would Harrison match up with the top three featherweights in the world, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, and Juan Manuel Marquez?



UNTWISTING THE CYCLONE

Solving The Mystery Of Old-Time Heavyweight

Billy Warren

By Patrick Myler

Slowly, painfully, he would shuffle his arthritic legs, with the aid of a Malacca cane, through Dublin city center to his daily perch outside the General Post Office on O'Connell Street.

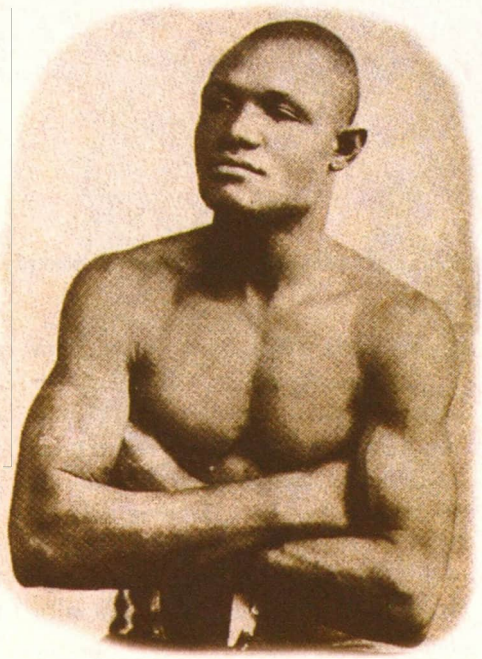
If it rained, he would switch to dry land under the canopy of the nearby Metropole Cinema, or shelter in an alcove around the corner on Princes Street, just a few yards from the site of La Scala Opera House, where Mike McTigue snatched the world light heavyweight title from that misguided optimist, Battling Siki, on St. Patrick's Day in 1923.

Passers-by would direct a friendly wave or a "Hello, Cyclone," and he would smile and tip his bowler hat in acknowledgement.

The tall, well-built black man, smartly dressed in a long Crombie overcoat, gleaming white collar, flashy tie or cravat, and a carnation in his buttonhole, cut a striking figure as he quietly observed the daily comings and goings of the native Irish over half a century ago.

Some say he stood on a wooden box, painted black and advertising Nugget boot polish, a rather demeaning way to earn a buck, if true. Others don't remember a box.

To those wary of approaching him, he remained a mystery figure. Although they knew his name, they wondered where had he come from, and why had he settled in Dublin, so far from home.



Warren (pictured) was somewhat of a mystery man. No one is sure where he was born or how many fights he had. But he ended his days living in Ireland, a local character who hung out on the streets of Dublin, telling tall tales about his boxing career.

To those who cared to listen, "Cyclone" Billy Warren would happily tell of his worldwide wanderings, his long career in the ring, and how he had "fought Jack Johnson six times."

While no one disputed that Warren was an entertaining storyteller, who could tell how much of what he said was fact, invented, or generously embellished?

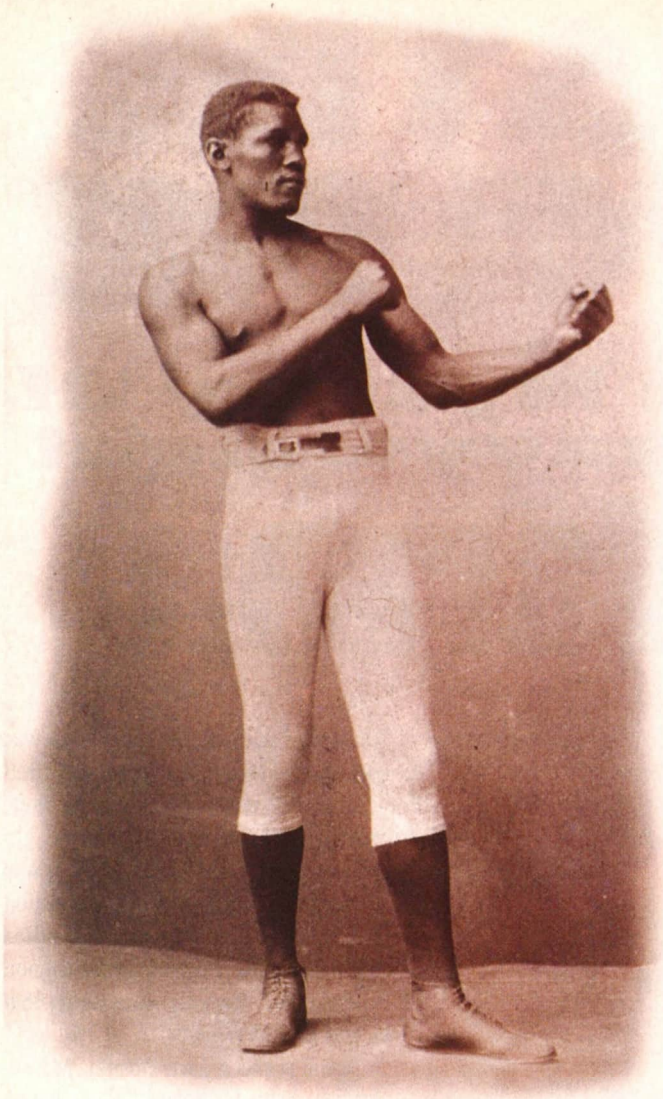
Firstly, his name wasn't Billy. It was Joseph. And then there was the question of his nationality. Though often billed as "the colored heavyweight champion of Australia," it seems most likely that he was an American.

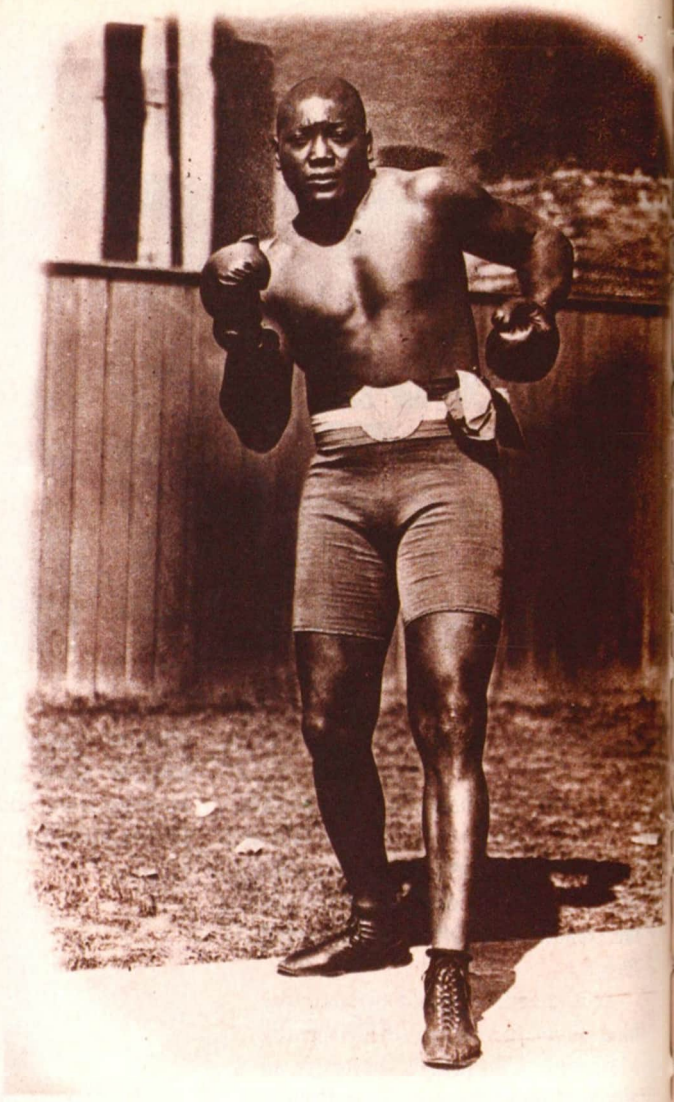
Some sources gave Boston, Massachusetts, as his birthplace, others that he was from Pennsylvania. Author Bernard Neary, in *North Of The Liffey—A Character Sketchbook*, published in 1984, said Warren was the son of a black slave forcibly taken to Australia, from where he made his way to the U.S. as a young man. No confirmation of his place of origin was contained in the newspaper obituaries at the time of his death in 1951.

As to his boxing career, while the records show he fought many well-known heavyweights in many different countries, other listed bouts have proved more difficult to authenticate.

Take his supposed series with Johnson. The way Warren told it, he was "pretty green" when he faced the future world heavyweight champion in a 10-round no decision bout in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, on Independence Day in 1908.

"I didn't know much about covering up





Warren claims to have fought both Peter Jackson (left) and Jack Johnson (right). But recent research reveals that "Cyclone" never boxed either man.

and defense, but I could take a good beating without swallowing the anchor," he informed an *Irish Press* reporter some 40 years later.

Johnson, he recalled, was not only the best heavyweight in the world when they fought, but also a great character who was impossible to rile. "You could call him all the names in the world and he'd only laugh—and the more he laughed, the more he fought."

An interesting story, sure, but did the fight really happen? Well, not on that date it didn't.

For Johnson was a long way from Wilkes-Barre right then. He was, in fact, in England, keeping up his persistent chase after world champion Tommy Burns, who steadfastly refused to face the leading contender. Burns was about to leave Europe for Australia when Johnson, needing to finance his efforts to stay on the elusive Canadian's trail, made a couple of ring appearances in Plymouth, a seaside town on England's southwest coast.

The dates of his exhibition with Al McNamara (June 11) and his knockout of Ben Taylor (July 31) make nonsense of Warren's claim to a July 4 joust with Johnson in the U.S.

Maybe Warren's memory was fading when he told the story, or perhaps he just got his dates mixed. But nowhere in any of the published records of Johnson's career does Warren's name appear.

While contests between two black men sometimes escaped notice in those times, it's unlikely that at least one of the alleged encounters between Johnson and Warren would not have been traced by diligent record keepers had they occurred.

THE RING's founder and long-time editor, Nat Fleischer, in a short chapter devoted to Warren in Volume One of his *Black Dynamite* series, stated that he "challenged Jack Johnson and Philadelphia Jack O'Brien to a finish fight for a side bet of $5,000, but neither was willing to meet him."

Referring to Warren as "the Australian Giant," Fleischer said he stood 6'1", weighed 210 pounds, and was athletically built. "He possessed considerable cleverness and also was a pretty good hitter," concluded Fleischer.

One of Warren's best fights, said Fleischer, was with Jack Mace in Melbourne, which he won by a knockout in the 17th round. Other notable victories were over George Barton, Sam McCarthy, Dick

Hendry, Tom Baker, Jack Hart, and Dan Kelly. Fleischer probably got his information from the *Police Gazette*, which credited the wins to Warren in an October 1907 article.

But the paper was wrong, as was Fleischer, in claiming that Cyclone had ended the career of the great Peter Jackson. Regrettably, many record compilers have perpetuated the myth that Warren and Jackson fought a 25-round draw in Melbourne on December 2, 1899. Fresh evidence has established beyond doubt that the fight never happened.

According to Fleischer, Jackson, who was shamefully ducked by world heavyweight champion John L. Sullivan, ostensibly due to his color but more likely because he was too dangerous, and who held Sullivan's conqueror, James J. Corbett, even for 61 rounds before it was declared "no contest," was "on his last legs" when he fought Warren.

Australian Bob Petersen, who is writing a biography of the renowned West Indies fighter, has uncovered the truth about the non-event. He confirms that Jackson was not in Australia in December 1899.

Already in the grip of tuberculosis that would kill him within two years, Jackson was a patient in the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, capital of British Columbia, where he was admitted on September 14 and discharged on December 12. After a spell of convalescence, he sailed for San Francisco on March 18, 1900, and three days later journeyed on to Australia, arriving, after a 10-year absence, on Easter Sunday (April 15).

"There was a boxer in Queensland at this time who went by the name of Young Jackson," said Petersen. "It could be that he was the one who fought Warren, but I have read everything I could find in the newspapers on boxing in Melbourne in December 1899 and could not find any mention of Warren."

If Cyclone did not fight either Jackson or Johnson, he certainly did square up to another of the outstanding black heavyweights of the era in Sam McVey. It happened in Paris, France, on April 2, 1909 (Some records show it as April 9). *Police Gazette* said Warren was outclassed and it was a wonder he survived the first round after being floored twice. He was down twice more in the second before being counted out.

It's from this period, when Warren was based in Europe, that his record becomes easier to follow. He fought on and off for another 20 years after the McVey setback, losing far more often than he won. But contemporary reports suggested he was hard done by when he was disqualified against "Young" John L. Sullivan "for hitting in holds." In his first bout since losing to McVey, Warren faced Sullivan in Belfast, Northern Ireland, for a £100 purse and a £25 side stake. Warren, reported *Police Gazette*, had his opponent in a bad way and would have won but for a biased referee. During a clinch in the 11th round, Sullivan was struck and "went down like a

One well-known fighter Warren did face was Sam McVey (pictured), but it wasn't a very glorious moment for Cyclone, who was stopped in the second round of the 1902 bout held in Paris, France.

log." Apparently there was a prior agreement between the fighters that there would be no punching during clinches.

Sullivan, an Irish-American from Massachusetts, was an annoying presence at ringside a month later when Cyclone was pronounced Irish heavyweight champion after knocking out Jem Roche in three rounds. *Mirror Of Life*, however, disputed the claim as the rounds were of two minutes duration and Warren was not an Irishman.

Roche, who had lasted all of 88 seconds in a world heavyweight title challenge to Tommy Burns a year earlier, was described as "hog fat and about three stone overweight" for the Warren encounter. A hard blow sent the Wexford blacksmith crashing to the floor, his head hitting the boards with a thud. He took 15 minutes to recover and was attended by a doctor in his dressing room.

After accepting the cheers of the crowd, the new "Irish champion" was held back as he tried to "get at" Sullivan.

Roche got himself into somewhat better shape for the return, outpointing Warren over 20 rounds. Cyclone, his nose broken as early as the fourth round and under sustained attack, fought gamely, but was a much-battered figure at the finish.

Philadelphia's Jim Maher, whose claim to be a brother of Peter Maher, one-time world heavyweight title claimant, was disputed, was forced to retire in the fourth round with an injured arm when he met Warren in Birkenhead, England. The same location saw Cyclone drop a 20-round decision to George Gunther of Australia. He managed to floor Gunther in a rematch, but still lost on points, this time over 10 rounds.

A possible clue to the phantom fights with Johnson and Jackson is that Warren, during his English sojourn, fought "Young" Jack Johnson and "Kid" Jackson, losing to both. Could it be that Cyclone, while reminiscing in later years, conveniently "forgot" that the pair he fought were not the original of the species?

After a repeat loss to Young Johnson in 1913, his eighth successive defeat, Warren took a six-year break, then reappeared in a Dublin ring to take on Jim Coffey, "The Roscommon Giant." Coffey, one of the better "white hopes" during Johnson's championship reign, was a big hitter and sent Warren crashing for the count in the first round.

Warren, now just in it for the money, fought twice in 1922. Belfast favorite Davy Magill forced him to retire after two rounds, and Tom Cowler, one-time protégé of James J. Corbett, also dispatched him in two.

After a seven-year gap, Billy made his final ring appearance, at age 52, in Belfast on February 15, 1929, dropping a six-round decision to "Yankee" Quinn.

Married to Louise, a Wolverhampton woman he had met in England before moving to Ireland, Warren would be seen on daily shopping expeditions, carrying the couple's meager needs in a large carpet bag to their single-room accommodation on Nelson Street, on the city's north side. Always, he would linger for a while outside the General Post Office to talk to friends and strangers alike.

Retired policeman and amateur boxing coach Mick Sutton recalls him as a regular customer at the Scotch House bar, near O'Connell Bridge, and "a quiet, independent man who wouldn't let you buy him a drink."

At the age of 74, Warren was taken seriously ill and was admitted to St. Kevin's Hospital, where he died on March 16, 1951. He was buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery. The death notice in the *Irish Independent* said his passing was "deeply regretted—he fought the good fight," while the *Evening Herald* noted that Dublin had lost one of its best loved characters.

Today, someone who stood idly on street corners would be regarded with caution, even suspicion, especially one who took delight in growling at frightened youngsters: "Come here, me big black man who eats white children." Back then, people got the joke. ■

Patrick Myler is a freelance writer based in Dublin, Ireland. He is the author of several boxing books and an occasional contributor to this magazine.

Warren claimed the Irish heavyweight title after knocking out Jem Roche, but as he wasn't Irish, some critics refused to accept him as the national champion. It all became academic when Roche (pictured) won a rematch.

New Face

(Continued from page 20)

IBF cruiserweight titlist Vassiliy Jirov.

"It was hard convincing him," Gotzev said. "He had no desire to turn professional. But I explained the game to him. Why should he remain an amateur for another four years? The loss to Vidoz was political. Why wait four years for another controversial decision?"

Gotzev saw what the others had not: Material things were of little consequence to the spiritual Peter, who in 2001 relocated to Las Vegas, where he met his future wife, Iasha, in church.

"Everyone want to be prospect and live good. I want what God give me," Peter said. "My ultimate dream is to live good with God. If you have money, you can bring up your kids in a good way. That's it. Have food. Clothes. Live healthy. I just need something to sustain me and my wife. When people die, they don't take one dollar with them. I try to do the best I can. What I believe, when I die I live with God."

"What a refreshing kid," Gotzev said of Peter. "Guys want to become champion so they can get to the good life that gets them all the glitter—all the jewelry, all the women, all the fast cars and limousines. Not Samuel. I've dealt with champions from the ghettos of America to the ghettos of Russia. Some had education, some were gangsters, some were normal citizens. But I have never seen anyone as humble and as good and willing as him. He has the qualities in life that makes me want to help him go all the way."

Since turning pro in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, on the Jirov-Alex Gonzalez undercard in February 2001, the 22-year-old Peter has punched his way to a record of 13-0 (12). Ten of his knockouts have come within the first two rounds, with only the well-traveled and iron-chinned journeyman Marion Wilson lasting the four-round distance with him.

Peter recently displayed his wares on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights,* when he met up with the best opponent he's faced yet, rugged southpaw journeyman Dale Crowe, at City Center Pavilion in Reno, Nevada. After loading up and throwing single right hands at the defensive-minded Crowe for the first three rounds, Peter caught up with his opponent in the fourth frame, pounding him to the floor twice on the way to another stoppage victory.

"I think he's the best young heavyweight in the world. He's the best puncher at a young age I've seen, including Mike Tyson," said Dino Duva, CEO of Duva Boxing, Peter's promoter. "He's got power in both hands. His hands are so heavy it's unbelievable. He still needs some refining, but if he keeps progressing, he can go all the way. He's a breath of fresh air."

Teddy Atlas, ESPN2's ringside analyst, gave Peter a more even-handed assessment.

"He has good natural power," said Atlas. "He's a natural heavyweight. Punchers are born, not made. You can't make power. But when you get to a higher level, you need more than just a big punch. You need ability. You need to be able to elude punches and land punches consistently against tough, determined guys who will still be there and won't go away. You can't depend on blowing everyone out of the water.

"He has raw ability, but he needs a lot of work. He's leaving himself wide open. He needs to shorten, tighten up his punches. Don't give up defense to create offense. He needs to get in a little better shape. I looked at his weight, and it's steadily increased since he came over here. Crowe was not very talented. He was there to be hit. He had nothing to keep Peter off. Peter consistently punched from too far away and left himself wide open."

Gotzev said he has already set the wheels in motion to deal with his young charge's deficiencies, including getting the 6'2", 247-pounder a full-time nutritionist. Gotzev said he is also conducting interviews to find a new trainer for Peter, who has been working with Andy "Pops" Anderson.

"I want him to fight every 45 to 60 days," Gotzev said. "I want to see him setting up his opponent more, using his terrific boxing skills. We're going to work on his footwork, on getting closer and working on distances. At the end of the year we want him ready to challenge anybody. We want to talk with all the young prospects, like Dominick Guinn, DaVarryl Williamson, Derek Byrant. We'd like a rematch with Paolo Vidoz."

For his part, Atlas said he thinks Peter needs some more work first.

"Peter needs to get in the gym. Most of your development is done in the gym," Atlas said. "He's not ready for DaVarryl Williamson. It would be interesting to watch on ESPN. I'd like to see it as an announcer. But as a trainer, I sure as hell wouldn't do it. Somebody's going to get knocked out. There's two ways to look at it. You can ignore it and say, *I've got good punching power*, or you say, *I need to get better*. To be a world champion, you have to be able to do more than punch a hole in the wall."

Besides punching power, Peter has another quality that one is either born with or not: charisma. After the fight with Crowe, throngs of ringside fans all wanted to reach out and touch him. Peter was happy to accommodate, smiling as he touched hands with as many people as he could.

While he was a bit more emotional after battle, Peter nevertheless remained non-confrontational when asked about a group of possible future opponents.

"The question is not for me," he said, smiling and shrugging his wide shoulders. "The question is for them—if they want to fight Samuel Peter."

Before stepping in with the young man who is called The Knockout Sensation, perhaps prospective opponents should look up someone else who has experience in such matters before making their decision—like a certain prefect in Nigeria. ■

Mike Houser is a boxing columnist for the Nevada Appeal.

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Hasim Rahman D 12 David Tua
Kirk Johnson KO 4 Lou Savarese
Monte Barrett W 10 Robert Wiggins
Joe Mesi KO 2 Jason Curry
Shannon Briggs KO 1 Marvin Hill
Michael Moorer W 10 Otis Tisdale
Nicolay Valuev W 12 Pedro Franco
Danell Nicholson W 6 Sione Asipeli
Eric Kirkland KO 9 Derek Bryant
David Bostice W 6 Ron Smith
Imamu Mayfield KO 6 Frankie Edmondson
Orlin Norris KO 5 Harry Funmaker
Calvin Brock KO 1 Shawn Robinson
Malik Scott W 6 Onebo Maxime
Brian Nix W 10 Tim Witherspoon
Kevin McBride KO 7 Najee Shaheed
Richel Hersisia W 8 Wojciech Bartnik
Vinny Maddalone KO 2 Brian Blakely
Terry Smith KO 3 Lorenzo Boyd
John Poore KO 2 Chucky Brown
Audley Harrison W 8 Ratko Draskovic
Sultan Ibragimov W 6 Chad Butler
Guru Singh W 4 Al Torres
Alexander Dimitrenko KO 2 Mark Bradley
Malcolm Tann W 4 Troy Beets
Butterbean D 4 Lewis Gilbert

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Vincenzo Cantatore KO 3 Aaron Soria
Arthur Williams Tech. Win 5 Wesley Martin
Julian Letterlough KO 1 Stacy Goodson
Rudiger May Tech. Win 7 Frederic Serrat
Alexander Petkovic KO 9 Alain Simon
Felix Cora Jr. D 10 Michael Simms
Luis Andres Pineda KO 7 Darmel Castillo
Donny Lalonde W 10 Willard Lewis
Steve Cunningham W 8 Demetrius Jenkins
Rydell Booker KO 5 Andrew Greeley

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Dariusz Michalczewski KO 9 Derrick Harmon
Clinton Woods KO 2 Arturo Rivera
David Telesco D 8 Ray Berry
Glencoffe Johnson D 10 Daniel Judah
Tony Oakey W 12 Neil Linford
Danny Green KO 6 Jorge Sclarandi
Zsolt Erdei KO 10 Jose Hilton Santos
Elvir Muriqi KO 3 Tiwon Taylor
Alejandro Lakatus KO 7 Roberto Coelho
Carl Handy W 12 Manu Ntoh
Danny Santiago KO 4 Robert Mohammed
Hugo Garay KO 4 Peter Venancio
John Wyborn KO 8 Pierre Karam
Randy Griffin W 6 Ronald Boddie

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Mike Stewart has Chucky T on the ropes

Will McIntyre W 6 Charles Daughtry
Laudelino Jose De Barros KO 7
Vinson Durham

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sven Ottke W 12 Byron Mitchell
(Retains IBF Title; Wins WBA Title)
Markus Beyer W 12 Eric Lucas
(Regains WBC Title)
Anthony Mundine KO 1 Rogerio Cacciatore
Francisco Mora KO 12 Fighting Nordin
Robin Reid KO 8 Enrique Carlos Campo
Kabary Salem KO 10 Ray Berry
Scott Pemberton KO 6 Levan Easley
Oscar Bravo KO 8 Danny Batchelder
Eric Mitchell KO 1 Alejandro Berrio
Aaron Mitchell KO 4 Tim Shocks
Kelly Pavlik KO 6 Cesar Avila
Jacqui Frazier-Lyde W 8 Shirvell Williams

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Bernard Hopkins KO 8 Morrade Hakkar
(Retains World Title)
Bert Schenk KO 3 Andile Tshongolo
Robert Allen KO 8 Jesse Aquino
Eric Regan KO 4 Rito Ruvalcaba
Jermain Taylor KO 5 Marcos Primera
Kirino Garcia KO 6 Arturo Lopez
Lorenzo DiGiacomo W 10 Jorge Ortiz
Wayne Elcock W 12 Anthony Farnell
Andras Galfi W 8 Alexandru Manea
Satoru Suzuki KO 3 Byungchul Oh
Mpush Makambi KO 6 Anthony Van Niekerk
Gary Lockett KO 1 Jason Collins
Max Heyman W 10 Norberto Sandoval

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Angel Hernandez KO 4 Larry Kenny
Michael Lerma W 12 Alfred Ankamah
Nader Hamdan W 12 Josh Clenshaw
Shawn Garnett W 12 Epifanio Mendoza
Alejandro Jimenez KO 4 Ruben Munoz
Luis Santiago KO 1 Gary Grant
Armando Velardez W 8 Ian MacKillop
Jimmy Lange W 8 Charles Clark
Anthony Thompson W 6 Alejandro Jimenez
Chad Dawson KO 3 Willie Lee
Yuri Foreman KO 1 James Johnson
Harry Yorgey KO 2 Vincent Russell

WELTERWEIGHTS

Cory Spinks W 12 Michele Piccirillo
(Wins IBF Title)
Teddy Reid KO 7 Pat Coleman
Miguel Callist KO 2 David Armstrong
Norberto Bravo KO 7 Jerry Balagbagan
Antonio Lauri W 10 Antonio DeBrito
Michele Orlando W 6 Julio Meran
Alexander Vetoux KO 1 Karl Taylor
Jose Celaya KO 2 Nelson Manchengo
Demetrius Hopkins W 10 Andre Eason
Jackson Osei Bonsu KO 2 Kamel Ikene
Troy Rowland KO 5 Greg Beerman
Dmitriy Salita KO 3 Ryan Maraldo
David Barnes W 8 Victor Fesschko
Grover Wiley KO 4 Homer Gibbins

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Ricky Hatton W 12 Vince Phillips
Junior Witter KO 4 Jurgen Haeck
Mike Stewart KO 7 Chucky T
Lovemore N'Dou Tech. Win 8
Damian Fuller
Saul Duran KO 9 Calvin Green
Terrance Cauthen W 12 Roberto Ortega
Frank Houghtaling W 12 Bernard Harris
Jesse Feliciano KO 6 Freddie Cadena
Armando Santa Cruz W 8
Rogelio Castaneda
Almazbek Raiymkulov W 8 Sergio Soto

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Angel Manfredy KO 7 Moises Pedroza
Alejandro Gonzalez W 10 John Brown
Julio Diaz KO 7 Ernesto Zepeda
Aldo Rios W 10 Gustavo Cuello
Lamar Murphy W 10 Isidro Tejedor
Steve Quinonez W 12 Antonio Ramirez
Courtney Burton KO 8 Gabriel Ruelas
Panther Yanagida W 10 Yoshihiko Shimoda
Yoni Vargas W 8 Luis Montes
Gary Balletto KO 1 Johnny Walker
Mia St. John W 6 Jessica Mohs

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Acelino Freitas KO 4 Juan Carlos Ramirez
(Retains WBA "Super" Title)
Manny Pacquiao KO 5
Serikzhan Yeshmangbetov
(Non-Title Bout)
Jesus Chavez KO 6 Carlos Gerena
Robbie Peden KO 4 Rudy Lunsford
Randy Suico KO 3 Timbul Hutagalung
Alex Arthur KO 6 Patrick Malinga
Art Simonyan KO 6 Ablorh Sowah
Michael Gomez KO 3 Vladimir Borov
Francisco Lorenzo KO 3 Santiago Matos
Greg Torres W 6 Kennedy McKinney
Tracy Byrd W 10 Agnieszka Rylik

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Scott Harrison W 12 Wayne McCullough
William Abelyan W 12 Jose Luis Tula
Luisito Espinosa KO 1 Marco Perez
Takashi Koshimoto W 12 Jaime Barcelona
Antonio Diaz W 10 Victorio Adadia
Juan Ruiz W 10 Dustin Kim
Hector Marquez KO 7 David Murillo
Chris John KO 2
Mahasamuth Kietparpanang
Dainoshin Kuma KO 1 Eugenio Gomez
Alberto Servidei W 10
Francesco D'Arcangelo
Jesus Vega KO 6 Fernando Gonzalez
Jose Aguiniga W 8 Gilberto Bolanos
Steven Luevano W 6 Philip Payne

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Salim Medjkoune W 12 Vincenzo Gigliotti
(Retains WBA Title)
Jose Luis Valbuena W 12 Julio Gamboa
Nadel Hussein KO 1 Leed Sabu
Adrian Valdez KO 1 Sammy Ventura
Jorge Linares KO 3 Singdam Montsaichol
Clarence Vinson W 8 Joey Garcia

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Ricardo Vargas Tech. Win 11
Gerson Guerrero
Roger Gonzalez KO 2
Heriberto Velasquez
Noel Wilders Tech. Draw 4 Frederic Patrac
Ratanachai Vorapin W 6 Andries Dick
Vernie Torres KO 8 Julio Oyuela
Debind Thapa W 8 Francisco Tejedor
Tonya Harding W 4 Shannon Birmingham

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Luis Bolano W 12 Cecilio Santos
Medgoen Singsurat KO 4 Archie Villamor
Yusuke Morishima KO 3
Yodpetch Chuwatana
Pramuansak Phosuwan KO 6 Albert Cezar
Daisuke Maruyama KO 5
Saenchaloeng Mahasapcondo

FLYWEIGHTS

Jorge Arce KO 2 Lee Sandoval
(Non-Title Bout)
Peter Culshaw W 12
Wandee Chor Chareon
Takefumi Sakata W 10 Trash Nakanuma
Denkaosaen Kaowichit W 6 Rodel Orais
Komrith Eveready KO 3
Roselito Campana

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Rosendo Alvarez W 12 Bebis Mendoza
(Wins Vacant World Title)
Kermin Guardia W 10 Mitchell Salgado
Arman De La Cruz KO 3 Sarikalek Ekarin

STRAWWEIGHTS

Miguel Barrera KO 3 Roberto Leyva
(Retains IBF Title)
Eduardo Marquez KO 11 Jorge Mata
Oleydong Sithsamuochai KO 5 Rey Orais
Heriberto Gijon KO 2 Roger Gadian

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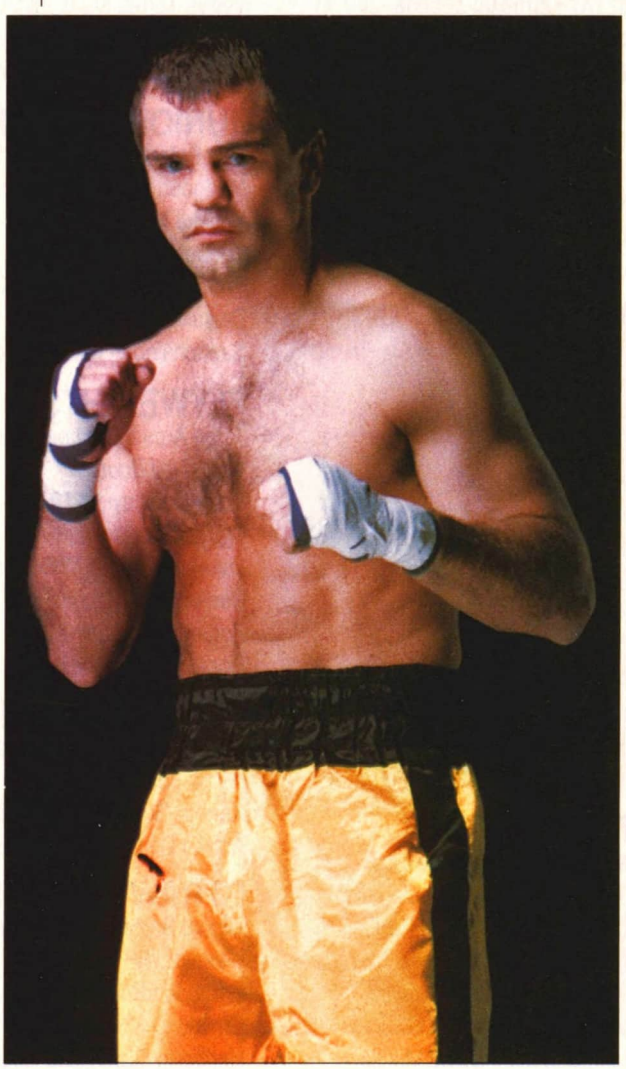
The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

Before Sven Ottke came along, the all-time record for most consecutive super middleweight title defenses was nine, set by Nigel Benn in the early-1990s. Now the record stands at 17. That's right, Ottke has nearly doubled the previous record. Of course, we're not saying it's the same as some heavyweight coming along and making 50 defenses to double Joe Louis' record. But it's still pretty darned impressive, and Ottke's latest defense was perhaps the most noteworthy of his entire 4½-year reign.



In March, Ottke unified two of the 168-pound belts by defeating heavy-handed Byron Mitchell, a win that pushed Ottke ahead of Joe Calzaghe and into the top spot in THE RING's super middleweight rankings once again. With the win over Mitchell, Ottke now has scored successful defenses against three of the nine men rated below him (Charles Brewer and Anthony Mundine are the other two), something the more protected Calzaghe can not come close to claiming. And by beating Mitchell, Ottke has shown once again that you don't need awesome power to reach awesome heights in boxing.

• • • •

Sven Ottke

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Winky Wright W 12 J.C. Candelo

Las Vegas, Nevada: Since Oscar De La Hoya beat Fernando Vargas in September '02, Wright's life has turned into a full-force campaign to lure junior middleweight world champion De La Hoya into the ring with him. But being a southpaw without much fan appeal, Wright has been a hard sell. And in retaining the IBF junior middleweight belt against Candelo on the undercard of the Roy Jones-John Ruiz fight at the Thomas & Mack Center, Wright failed to change that at all.

While Wright was actually engaged in one of his more entertaining fights in recent years, it was so much closer and tougher than expected that it hurt Wright's claim to deserving a shot at De La Hoya. Besides, most fans and media were busy chatting about the upcoming main event rather than paying attention to Wright's third defense of his crown.

Wright, 29, won the first three rounds, doing what he usually does: boxing cleverly and avoiding nearly everything Candelo was throwing. But the fight took a turn in the fourth. Candelo, 153, Colombia, suddenly became more active, while Wright, 153½, St. Petersburg, Florida, went into a defensive shell.

From the fourth until the ninth round, Candelo, 29, worked his way into the fight—and arguably into the lead. He was landing the harder punches and connecting more frequently than Wright, who seemed content to throw arm punches with little behind them. In the sixth, Wright's right eye began to swell.

Sensing the fight slipping from his grasp, Wright poured on the pressure in the 10th through 12th rounds. Fighting with a sense of desperation, Wright used a right-left combination to get Candelo's attention in the 11th, and then he outboxed Candelo, 25-5-3 (17), in the 12th.

THE RING had Wright narrowly winning by a score of 115-113 thanks to his late rally. But the judges saw a much less competitive fight. Paul Smith (USA) had it 118-110 for Wright, and Glen Hamada (USA) and Al Munoz (USA) both tallied 117-111.

"Candelo was awkward and he kept bouncing in and out, leading with his head," Wright, 45-3 (25), said afterward. "I would have preferred knocking him out, but I'm satisfied. It wasn't a great fight, though, so maybe Oscar might start to think that he can do a few things against me now."

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Don King Productions
(3-1-03)
Joseph Santoliquito

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Wright snaps a straight left at Candelo

Jean-Marc Mormeck KO 8 Alexander Gurov

Las Vegas, Nevada: Mormeck's American debut—and second WBA cruiserweight title defense—started out a little shaky, as the Frenchman took plenty of punches from Gurov in the early rounds of their fight at the Thomas & Mack Center. But once Mormeck began closing the gap and getting inside, he was able to set a fast pace and eventually score a knockout, despite trailing on two of the three judges' scorecards at the time of the stoppage.

The action picked up quickly when Mormeck, 187½, began to wade into the taller Gurov, 188½, with gloves held high, attacking the Ukrainian's midsection with looping rights and uppercuts. The bout was consistently exciting from that point on, as there were times when it seemed Mormeck and Gurov could not miss each other if they tried. Mormeck kept scoring with straight rights and right-left combinations, and Gurov hit Mormeck with a steady flow of jabs.

Gurov, however, could not keep up with the frenetic pace, and didn't hit hard enough to slow Mormeck down. The 31-year-old challenger began to show signs of fading in the fourth round, whereas Mormeck, 30, appeared to grow stronger with each passing minute.

By the sixth, Mormeck was in complete control of the fight. A big right hand rocked Gurov, 32-4-1 (27), in the middle of the round, but the Ukrainian quickly recovered, staving off Mormeck by backing away and using his long jab. In the seventh, Mormeck nailed Gurov with a left hook, and a three-punch combination left the challenger slumping against the ropes momentarily.

"I always wanted to be on him, I wanted to tire him out," Mormeck said. "I thought if I could work him on the right side, I could wear him down. After the sixth, I knew he was tired."

Sensing the end was near, Mormeck pressed the issue at the outset of the eighth, hitting Gurov with a straight right followed by a series of unanswered punches. Referee Kenny Bayless (USA) called a halt at the 32-second mark of the eighth with Gurov still on his feet.

"This was my first fight in the United States, and I felt a lot of pressure coming in," said Mormeck, 29-2

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Mormeck puts the finishing touches on a worn-down Gurov

(21), through interpreter Natalie Christol. "In the second round, I started to feel a little more comfortable. I wanted to make a good impression on the fans here, but I did not want the fight to go eight rounds. I wanted to be more efficient. I thought the fight lasted too long."

Television: DirecTV
Promoter: Don King Productions
(3-1-03)
Joseph Santoliquito

Alex Garcia KO 3 Santiago Samaniego

Las Vegas, Nevada: Entering his fight with WBA super welterweight titlist Samaniego on the Jones-Ruiz undercard at the Thomas & Mack Center, Garcia's victim list wasn't exactly a who's-who of the 154-pound division. But there was one glaring fact that couldn't be ignored, regardless of the level of opposition: Garcia had scored 19 knockouts in his 20 fights as a professional.

Make that 20 in his first 21, after Garcia dispatched Samaniego, 36-7-1 (29), rather easily with a third-round knockout.

"He's fought only a bunch of drunks," Samaniego said of Garcia before the fight. "He's flat-footed, and anyone who stays in front of me is in trouble. He's been protected and he's overrated."

Samaniego, 154, Panama, found out otherwise rather quickly. In the first round, Garcia, 153½, Mexico, landed a right hand, followed by a left hook that dropped Samaniego to the canvas. Samaniego got up at the count of five, but was very unsteady.

Sensing he had Samaniego, 29, in danger, Garcia, 23, attacked again, putting together a flurry of punches that had the defending titlist in serious trouble in the final 10 seconds of the opening round. But the bell sounded, temporarily saving Samaniego.

The second round was decidedly different. Samaniego, making his first defense of the title he captured after the WBA made it vacant by naming Oscar De La Hoya "super champion," appeared fully recovered and got up on his toes and outboxed Garcia. He kept his distance from the challenger, pecking away with a consistent jab. Samaniego also attacked the body and then quickly got out of harm's way before Garcia could set himself up for a counter attack.

But in the third round, the momentum shifted decisively in Garcia's favor. When Samaniego stopped moving for just a moment, Garcia quickly nailed him with a right. Hurt and reeling once more, Samaniego let his hands down, and Garcia took full advantage, slamming home a straight right-left hook combination.

Garcia stepped back to give himself more punching room and drilled Samaniego with a straight right to the head that put him on his back. Referee Tony Weeks (USA) only reached the count of two before waving off the fight at the 1:46 mark of the third round.

Promoter: Don King Productions
(3-1-03)
Joseph Santoliquito

Sven Ottke W 12 Byron Mitchell

Berlin, Germany: It is a real pity that the two best super middleweights in the world seem destined never to dispute the right to be acknowledged as the fighter supreme at 168 pounds. Joe Calzaghe has beaten every man he has faced and so, too, has Ottke, 167, Germany, who controlled and mastered rival titlist Mitchell, 167¼, Ozark, Alabama, to add the WBA belt to the IBF title he has now defended 17 times over 4½ years. The 10,000 in attendance at Max Schmeling Halle rose to acknowledge one of the most accomplished performers in boxing today after his split decision victory.

It is not that the 35-year-old Ottke does anything out of the ordinary. In fact, the six stoppages he has to his name in 30 unbeaten fights would be held against him by many as evidence of his limitations, particularly where landing damaging punches is con-

PHOTO BY BARRY CANNON

Ref Weeks raises Garcia's hand

cerned. But the truth is that Ottke has an innate ability to calculate what he needs to do to win, and he does no more. That he has beaten every man he has ever faced, having also achieved Olympic triumph as an amateur, is enough to earn him the credit he feels he is entitled to.

"The last round was hard. The rest were just fine," he said after thwarting Mitchell's hopes of making his superior firepower count. Indeed, the final round was the only round in which Ottke was hurt, caught by a left hook and right hand that had him wobbling. He steadied himself quickly, demonstrated his experience by extricating himself from his only moment of crisis, and returned to doing what was winning him the fight—boxing, moving, firing light bursts that kept Mitchell pre-occupied, and stacking up enough points to convince two of the judges that he deserved their verdict.

From the opening bell, Ottke's plan was clear. He moved in and out, got off with tight combinations, and got away again before Mitchell could implement his plan to pressure his nimble foe. Mitchell, 29, was never able to follow this strategy because Ottke would not allow him to, and by the third, the American was already growing frustrated with his lack of success—and perhaps was beginning inwardly to acknowledge that he was facing a man he could not dictate to.

Mitchell did get through with a solid right in the fifth and had Ottke in some distress, but the German is a crafty veteran and he overcame the danger as suddenly as it had come to visit him. Referee Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) had no problem in controlling the fight, though it became messy in the later rounds when Mitchell tried to land the wild powershots that he hoped would turn the fight in his favor.

Samuel Conde Lopez (Puerto Rico) did score emphatically for Mitchell, 116-112. But Manuel Maritxalar (Spain) scored 115-113 and Derek Milham (Australia) had it 116-114, both for Ottke. Afterward, Mitchell, 25-2-1 (18), acknowledged that Ottke deserved the victory.

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland

(3-15-03)

Brian Doogan

Acelino Freitas KO 4 Juan Carlos Ramirez

Chicago, Illinois: Becoming a boxing technician instead of a knockout artist didn't seem to please many fight fans. So Freitas handpicked a puffed-up former junior featherweight and featherweight and defended the WBA 130-pound "super" title, as well as the WBO belt, in predictable fashion, overwhelming his Mexican opponent at the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion. It was the first major title fight in the Windy City since Edwin Rosario's 1987 lightweight defense against Juan Nazario.

After each fighter scored a spurious knockdown on non-punches—Ramirez in the second round, and Freitas in the third—the Brazilian's unyielding fury ended matters, beginning with an overhand right for a legitimate and fight-altering knockdown in the final half-minute of the third round.

Ramirez was saved by the bell, and two of his cornermen tried to create a delay by dabbing at a watery spot on the canvas at the beginning of the fourth round. But the cornermen were shoved out of the ring by referee Geno Rodriguez (USA). Nineteen seconds later, under a hellish Freitas torrent, the fight was halted, dropping the 25-year-old challenger to 29-5 (12). Freitas and Ramirez both weighed the 130-pound limit.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Undersized and overmatched Ramirez succumbs to Freitas' power

Freitas, 33-0 (30), who blew out his first 29 professional opponents, returned to his familiar victory mode after successive decisions over Alfred Kotey, Joel Casamayor, and Daniel Attah. Even Freitas' wife, Eliana, said she was more worried than usual about the Ramirez fight, "because I knew Acelino was going for a knockout."

Freitas, 27, hadn't fought in more than seven months, in part because of the December 2002 cancer death of his father, Babinha Freitas. "Popo" dedicated the victory to his father, though the bout fell on his mother's birthday.

"I never look for the knockout, but knockouts were very important to my father," Freitas said.

While Freitas talked the good fight before the bout, saying a matchup against lightweight champion Floyd Mayweather, "is not just about the money—it's about the glory, it's about showing the world who the true champion is," he wasn't singing the same tune after his victory. Freitas by then was toeing the party line of his promoter, Art Pelullo, saying, "I would like to have all four [130-pound] titles," before moving up to lightweight, which could mean fights against Sirimongkol Singmanassak and Carlos Hernandez first.

Promoters: Banner Promotions, Hitz Boxing Promotions

Television: Showtime

(3-15-03)

David Mayo

Mehdi Sahnoune KO 7 Bruno Girard

Marseilles, France: An ecstatic crowd of 7,000 at the Palais des Sports cheered on local favorite Sahnoune, who became the first fighter from Marseilles to win a major alphabet title. In control

through much of the fight, Sahnoune, 174, applied the finish toward the end of the seventh, by which time Girard, 174¼, Blois, France, had taken enough punishment to make the referee's intervention inevitable. It was the third time Girard had put the spurious WBA light heavyweight belt (Roy Jones remains the "super champion") on the line.

The defending titlist came under intense pressure early on. In the second round, he was rocked several times by powerful left-right combinations. Sahnoune, 24-0 (21), seemed inspired by the raucous home support, and his punching had accuracy and authority. Girard found it difficult to counter his power and was knocked into the ropes as Sahnoune teed off.

The third and fourth rounds proved better for Girard, 42-3-2 (7), and he seemed to have gained a foothold—though his hold on the title always looked tenuous, so intent was the challenger on seizing this chance. Sahnoune, 26, took the initiative again in the fifth when the 32-year-old Girard was staggered by yet another quick combination. By then, it was a question of time. It ended soon enough. The seventh was painful for Girard, who got nailed by a number of rights and lefts before a strong straight right had him reeling and a powerful uppercut prompted referee Daniel Talon (France) to show him the mercy Sahnoune lacked.

"I feel very proud to be the first man from Marseilles to win a world title and to do it in front of my family and fans makes it even more special," said Sahnoune. "Bruno Girard was a very good champion, and I hope to be one, too. That's my aim now."

Promoter: AB Stars
(3-8-03)
Brian Doogan

Miguel Barrera KO 3 Roberto Leyva.

Las Vegas, Nevada: The second fight between Miguel Barrera and Roberto Leyva showcased some of the best boxing of 2002. It was a memorable war that deserved recognition as one of the top fights of the year.

The third fight did nothing but showcase Barrera.

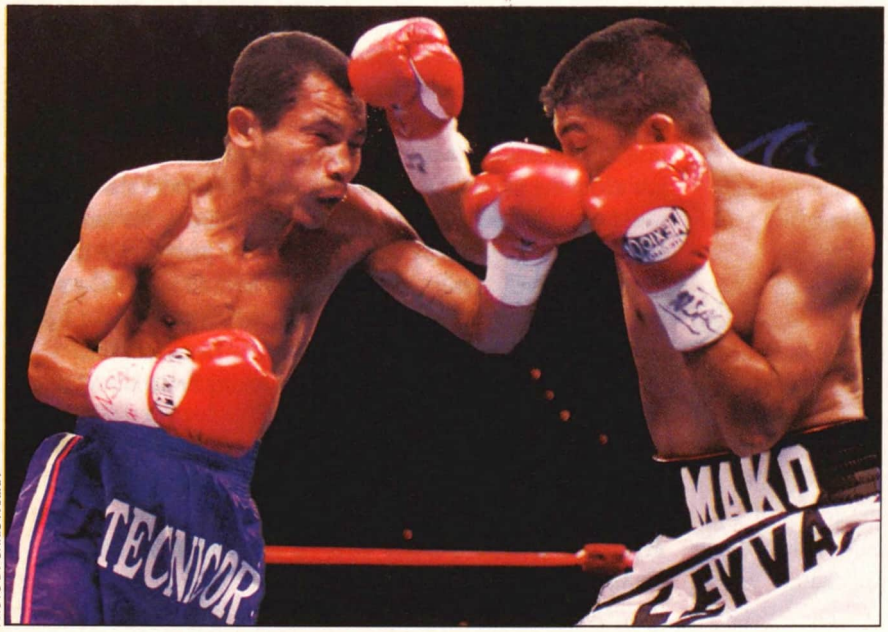


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Barrera and Leyva swap blows in their conclusive third bout

Barrera won the highly anticipated rematch to the rematch in dominating fashion, knocking out Leyva at 1:07 of the third round with a right to the solar plexus, establishing himself as the man to beat in the strawweight division. Barrera, 104½, pummeled Leyva, 105, from start to finish at Mandalay Bay, proving to be too strong for the game Mexican. It marked Barrera's first defense of the IBF mini fly crown he won from Leyva in August '02.

The first fight between the two, in September '01, ended in the third round when an accidental butt led to a technical draw after a nasty cut was opened on Leyva's head. The next fight was a classic that had nearly as much action as the much more publicized battle between Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward. The third go, though, was nothing to write home about because Barrera made it so one-sided.

Trainer Miguel Diaz worked the corner for both men in the series, working with Barrera in the first and third fights and Leyva in the second. He said Leyva simply could not contend with Barrera's strength.

"Barrera was just too strong for him," Diaz said. "I told him to go to the body—nothing but body, because Barrera was hurting him. In the first round, he hit him with a bodyshot and you could see Leyva sag. It was almost over then."

Leyva had a little more punishment to take, though. The two spent long periods on the ropes, but Leyva, 23, had nothing to keep Barrera, 24, off and he took a frightful beating. The end came with a perfectly delivered right to the pit of Leyva's stomach, which caused him to collapse in a heap in the center of the ring. He gasped for air as referee Tony Weeks (USA) tolled the count.

"He hit me here," Leyva, 21-2-1 (18), said, pointing to his solar plexus, "and I couldn't breathe."

Barrera said he was happy when Leyva decided to press the attack again instead of trying to box and fight from a distance. He knew from the first two fights that that style of bout would favor him.

"That's the way I like to fight," Barrera, 20-0-2 (12), said. "I put pressure on all the time and eventually they'll go down. I expected a lot tougher fight, but I'm glad it finished early."

Television: SET Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Top Rank
(3-22-03)
Kevin Iole

Cory Spinks W 12 Michele Piccirillo

Campione D'Italia, Italy: He was born in the year his father won the world heavyweight title and, at 25, Spinks, 146, St. Louis, Missouri, joined him as a major titleholder. Piccirillo, 146, Italy, had beaten him by controversial decision last April to win the vacant IBF welterweight title, but this time Spinks made no mistake, winning convincingly to set up a potential world title shot down the line against Ricardo Mayorga, the recent conqueror of Vernon Forrest.

"This is a fight we're definitely looking at putting on," said promoter Don King.

It is a fight Spinks would welcome.

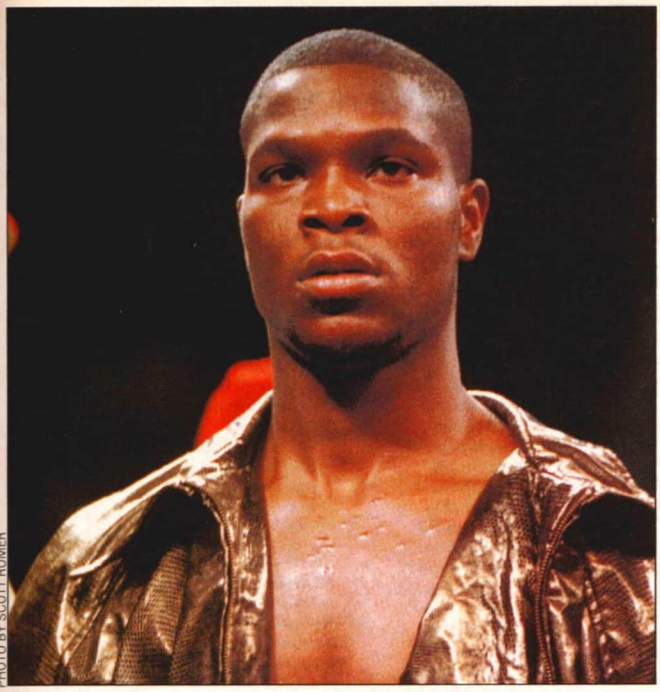


PHOTO BY SCOTT ROMER

Spinks got the decision over Piccirillo in his second try

Mayorga came out like a bull to rip the WBC welterweight belt from the waist of Forrest by third-round knockout in January, but Spinks' slick boxing, coupled with his southpaw stance, might prove more problematic for the Nicaraguan. The contrasting styles would undoubtedly make it a match to savor.

Spinks savored this one, too. He believed he had been victimized when they fought before and he was intent on gaining his revenge in the rematch. He had looked in control through long stretches of their initial meeting and this gave him the confidence to execute his game plan to a more productive level the second time around.

"He was faster and more aggressive," said the 33-year-old Italian, who indicated he planned to retire by the end of the year. "I knew I was going to have problems against his left-handed boxing."

From the outset, this was clear. Piccirillo had been beaten just once before, in 1996 when he lost a decision to Denmark's Soren Sondergaard in a European junior welterweight title fight. But he was second best all night to Spinks. The jab was a productive weapon for Spinks throughout, and his combination punching was faster and more assertive.

Halfway through the bout, Piccirillo got through with several right hands that stung the challenger, but he could not capitalize. Spinks, 31-2 (11), was simply too confident and motivated to be denied and was prepared to weather whatever would come his way. In the later rounds, Piccirillo, 37-2 (23), faded, and Spinks was able to box his way to the final bell with conviction. He knew the belt was his, and so did the Italian, who finished the bout with a cut on his left eyebrow.

American judge Albert Bennett scored it 117-111, another American, George Stewart, had it 117-112, and Italy's Luciano Tagliamonte saw it 115-113, all in favor of Spinks, who burst into tears when they gave him the belt.

(3-22-03)

Brian Doogan

Manny Pacquiao KO 5 Serikzhan Yeshmangbetov

Manila, Philippines: Yeshmangbetov, 2-4 (1), probably never figured he'd be remembered much outside of his native Kazakhstan. But now he can count on millions of Filipinos forever remembering his long name and his huge heart. For he put Pacquiao on his rear end for only the fourth time in the IBF junior featherweight titlist's career.

What that says about Pacquiao is that he'd better get his act together, and soon. Not that "Pac-Man" was ever all that close to losing this fight, a non-title battle in front of over 100,000 fans in Rizal Park that he went on to win by TKO in the fifth. But the dynamite packing Filipino lefty gave a performance that raised more questions than it answered, and left even his most ardent fans wondering if he'll ever reach the heights to which his awesome talent surely could take him.

Because Pacquiao's 122-pound title was not on the line, the two fighters agreed on a weight limit of 127 pounds. Pacquiao has often talked about moving up to featherweight, and it was intriguing to see if the extra weight might add to his already awesome power. But clearly Pacquiao wasn't taking this fight seriously.

So when Pacquiao knocked the unknown Yeshmangbetov down with a straight left in the first round, everyone, including Pacquiao, was sure it would be over in a matter of moments. But the tough Kazakh hung on and then started to fight back. Pacquiao then seemed to lose his concentration.

In the second and third rounds, Pacquiao landed some vicious shots that bloodied the mouth of Yeshmangbetov. But a lot of his punches were wild. He started to look sloppy and undisciplined. His vaunted straight left was flying high and out of control. Any of the big names in the featherweight division would have easily exploited the obvious openings.

And that's exactly what Yeshmangbetov did in the fourth. The two stood in the middle of the ring and, for at least 10 seconds, engaged in a beautiful tit-for-tat flurry of hard leather that ended with the Kazakh bringing his right under one of Pacquiao's high and wild lefts and sending the beltholder thumping down to the canvas. Pacquiao immediately got up, shaken and embarrassed, and gutted out the round.

Rage and raw power took over for Pacquiao, 24, as he came out serious and firing in the fifth, knocking down Yeshmangbetov with a straight left. The Kazakh got up, then went down again seconds later after another barrage. Referee Sylvestre Abainza (Philippines) should have let it go, especially as Yeshmangbetov had floored Pacquiao in the previous round and the three knockdown rule was in effect. But instead he saved Pac-Man the trouble and waved it off at the 1:52 mark.

Afterward, Pacquiao, 36-2-1 (28), blamed the knockdown on overconfidence and vowed he had learned a valuable lesson. His manager talked about moving up to featherweight and taking on the likes of Marco Antonio Barrera. But if Pacquiao wants to compete and win on that level, he obviously has to take his game much more seriously than he is now. He's been playing a lot of pool these days and keeping himself in the limelight in the Philippines, which may be taking a toll on his skills. And the extra weight didn't seem to fit just yet.

Promoter: Elorde International Productions

(3-15-03)

Ted Lerner ■

Alphabet Ratings

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of January 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: John Ruiz (USA)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. David Tua (NZ)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. Mike Tyson (USA)
5. Evander Holyfield (USA)
6. Fres Oquendo (PR)
7. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
8. Faruq Saleem (USA)
9. Lamon Brewster (USA)
10. Joe Mesi (USA)
11. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
12. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
2. James Toney (USA)
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Luis Pineda (PAN)
6. Valery Brudov (RUS)
7. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
8. Ravea Springs (USA)
9. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
10. Louis Azille (GUY)
11. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
12. Alexander Petkovick (GER)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Bruno Girard (FRA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Lou Del Valle (USA)
3. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
4. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
5. Manuel Siaca (PR)
6. Montell Griffin (USA)
7. Jorge Castro (ARG)
8. David Telesco (USA)
9. Reggie Johnson (USA)
10. Rocky Torres (USA)
11. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
12. Rodney Moore (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Byron Mitchell (USA)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
3. David Starie (GB)
4. Mads Larsen (DEN)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Danilo Haussler (GER)
7. Thomas Tate (USA)
8. Markus Beyer (GER)
9. Nordin Ben Salah (NETH)
10. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
11. Charles Brewer (USA)
12. Freeman Barr (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
4. Robert Allen (USA)
5. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
6. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
7. Howard Eastman (GB)
8. Erland Betare (FRA)
9. Evans Ashira (DEN)
10. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
11. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
12. Carl Daniels (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Champ: Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
1. Vacant
2. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
3. Travis Simms (USA)
4. J.C. Candelo (COL)
5. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
6. Shane Mosley (USA)
7. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
8. Michael Rask (DEN)
9. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
10. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
11. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
12. Angel Hernandez (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GER)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
6. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
7. Cory Spinks (USA)
8. Felix Flores (PR)
9. Carlos Quintana (PR)
10. Vince Phillips (USA)
11. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
12. Danny Perez (USA)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)
1. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
6. Arturo Gatti (USA)
7. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
8. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
9. Zab Judah (USA)
10. Ener Julio (COL)
11. Randall Bailey (USA)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Lakva Sim (MON)
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Raul Balbi (ARG)
5. Steve Johnston (USA)
6. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
7. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
8. Angel Manfredy (USA)
9. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
10. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
11. Orlando Salido (MEX)
12. Steve Quinonez (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
4. Phillip Ndou (SA)
5. Daniel Attah (NIG)
6. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Silvano Usini (ITA)
8. Carlos Hernandez (SAL)
9. Jesus Chavez (MEX)
10. Randy Suico (PHIL)
11. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
12. Nate Campbell (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Daniel Seda (PR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Injin Chi (KOR)
6. Antonio Cermeno (VEN)
7. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
8. Chris John (IND)
9. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Victor Polo (COL)
12. Oscar Leon (COL)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
3. Yober Ortega (VEN)
4. Osamu Sato (JAP)
5. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
6. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
7. Johnny Armour (GB)
8. Paulie Ayala (USA)
9. Michael Brodie (GB)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Napapol Kiattisachokchai (THAI)
12. Israel Vasquez (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Vacant
2. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
3. Eidy Moya (VEN)
4. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
5. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
6. Leo Gamez (VEN)
7. Jose Rojas (VEN)
8. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
9. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
10. Moises Castro (NIC)
11. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
12. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Sompichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
3. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
4. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
5. Luis Bolanos (COL)
6. Masayuki Arinaga (JAP)
7. Meiji C.P. Gym (THAI)
8. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
9. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
10. Sot Sor Veerapol (THAI)
11. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
12. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
2. Masaki Nakamura (JAP)
3. Damaen Kelly (GB)
4. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
5. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
6. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
7. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
8. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
9. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
10. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
12. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
2. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
3. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
4. Alex Sanchez (PR)
5. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
6. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
9. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
10. Tatsuo Kayashida (JAP)
11. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
12. Kazuo Okada (JAP)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Khulile Makeba (SA)
4. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
5. Katzunari Takayama (JAP)
6. Daniel Reyes (COL)
7. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
8. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
9. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
10. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
11. Wandee Charoen (THAI)
12. Juan Landaeta (VEN)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of February 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Hasim Rahman (USA)
3. Mike Tyson (USA)
4. Evander Holyfield (USA)
5. David Tua (NZ)
6. Lamon Brewster (USA)
7. John Ruiz (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Fres Oquendo (USA)
10. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
11. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
12. Michael Grant (USA)
13. Joe Mesi (USA)
14. Lou Savarese (USA)
15. Faruq Saleem (USA)
16. Danny Williams (GB)
17. Jeremy Williams (USA)
18. Lance Whitaker (USA)
19. Frans Botha (SA)
20. Larry Donald (USA)
21. Brian Nielsen (DEN)
22. Andre Purlette (GUY)
23. Clifford Etienne (USA)
24. Tommy Martin (USA)
25. DaVarryl Williamson (USA)
26. Maurice Harris (USA)
27. Timo Hoffman (GB)
28. Cedric Boswell (USA)
29. Dimitry Bakhtov (KAZ)
30. Nikolay Valouev (RUS)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. Louis Azille (DR)
4. James Toney (USA)
5. Sebastiaan Rothmann (SA)
6. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
7. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
8. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
9. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
10. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
11. Alain Simon (FRA)
12. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
13. Ravea Springs (USA)
14. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
15. Rudiger May (GER)
16. Rydell Booker (USA)
17. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
18. Turan Bagci (TUR)
19. Saul Montana (MEX)
20. Kelvin Davis (USA)
21. Mark Hobson (GB)
22. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
23. Virgil Hill (USA)
24. Frederic Serrat (FRA)
25. Ezra Sellers (USA)
26. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
27. Jason Robinson (USA)
28. Mohamed Ben Guesmia (ALG)
29. Grigory Drozd (RUS)
30. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Montell Griffin (USA)
3. Clinton Woods (GB)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Jorge Castro (ARG)
6. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
7. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
8. Eric Harding (USA)
9. Derrick Harmon (USA)
10. Stipe Drews (CRO)
11. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
12. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
13. Rodney Moore (USA)
14. Orlando Rivera (PR)
15. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
16. Robert Stieglitz (GER)
17. Rocky Torres (USA)
18. Tony Oakey (GB)
19. Elvis Michailenko (LAT)
20. Alejandro Lakatus (ROM)
21. Arturo Rivera (MEX)
22. Silvio Branco (ITA)
23. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
24. Zsolt Erdei (HUN)
25. Sasha Mitrevski (MACE)
26. George Jones (USA)
27. Daniel Judah (USA)
28. Rodney Toney (USA)
29. Michael Rush (USA)
30. Ron Simms (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Lucas (CAN)
1. Markus Beyer (GER)
2. Antwun Echols (USA)
3. Danilo Haussler (GER)
4. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
5. Mads Larsen (DEN)
6. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
7. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
8. Dan Batchelder (USA)
9. Omar Sheika (USA)
10. Andre Thysse (SA)
11. David Starie (GB)
12. Henry Porras (CR)
13. Charles Brewer (USA)
14. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
15. Glenn Catley (GB)
16. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
17. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
18. Mario Veit (GER)
19. Robin Reid (GB)
20. Jeff Lacy (USA)
21. Brian Magee (GB)
22. Kabary Salem (EGY)
23. Nordin Ben Salah (HOL)
24. James Lubwana (UGA)
25. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
26. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
27. Victor Oganov (RUS)
28. Charles Adamu (GHA)
29. Craig Cummings (USA)
30. Jerson Ravelo (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
2. Howard Eastman (GB)
3. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
4. Robert Allen (USA)
5. Erland Betare (FRA)
6. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
7. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
8. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
9. Oure Evans (KEN)
10. Raymond Joval (HOL)
11. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
12. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
13. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
14. Quentin Smith (USA)
15. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
16. Carl Daniels (USA)
17. Andras Galfi (HUN)
18. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
19. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
20. Tony Ayala (USA)
21. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
22. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
23. Ramon Britez (ARG)
24. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
25. Jermain Taylor (USA)
26. Satoru Suzuki (JAP)
27. Bert Schenk (GER)
28. Maselino Masoe (NZ)
29. Eric Regan (USA)
30. Rubin Williams (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)
1. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
2. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Wayne Alexander (GB)
5. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
6. Kassim Ouma (USA)
7. Michael Rask (DEN)
8. Richard Williams (GB)
9. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
10. Alex Bunema (USA)
11. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
12. Raul Marquez (USA)
13. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
14. Angel Hernandez (MEX)
15. Yory Boy Campas (MEX)
16. Julio Garcia (CUB)
17. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
18. J.C. Candelo (COL)
19. Andrei Pestriaev (RUS)
20. Steve Roberts (GB)
21. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
22. Travis Simms (USA)
23. Rodney Jones (USA)
24. Carlos Bojorquez (USA)
25. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
26. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
27. Anderson Clayton (BRA)
28. Emmett Linton (USA)
29. Michael Jones (GB)
30. Peter Manfredo (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
1. Vernon Forrest (USA)
2. Shane Mosley (USA)
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
5. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
6. Alexander Vetoux (UKR)
7. Cory Spinks (USA)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
10. Michel Trabant (GER)
11. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
12. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
13. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
14. Michele Orlando (ITA)
15. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
16. Teddy Reid (USA)
17. Paolo Roberto (SWE)
18. Christian Bladt (DEN)
19. James Hare (GB)
20. Felix Flores (PR)
21. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
22. Neil Sinclair (GB)
23. Eduardo Bejarano (ARG)
24. Carlos Quintana (PR)
25. Kermit Cintron (USA)
26. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
27. Riad Menasria (ALG)
28. Chris Smith (USA)
29. Christopher Henry (BAR)
30. Alpaslam Aguzum (TUR)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Ricky Hatton (GB)
3. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Zab Judah (USA)
6. Omar Weis (ARG)
7. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
8. Micky Ward (USA)
9. Miguel Cotto (PR)
10. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
11. James Leija (USA)
12. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
13. Eamonn Magee (GB)
14. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)
15. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
16. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
17. Kelson Pinto (BRA)

18. Ricardo Williams (USA)
19. Ener Julio (COL)
20. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
21. Junior Witter (GB)
22. Ben Tackie (GHA)
23. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
24. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
25. Ricky Quiles (USA)
26. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
27. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
28. Carlos Mairena (NIC)
29. Allan Vester (DEN)
30. Matoki Sasaki (JAP)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Steve Johnston (USA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
5. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
6. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
7. Jason Cook (GB)
8. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
9. David Burke (GB)
10. Juan Diaz (MEX)
11. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
12. Aldo Rios (ARG)
13. Julio Diaz (USA)
14. Bobby Vanzie (GB)
15. Carlos Gerena (PR)
16. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
17. Colin Dunne (GB)
18. Alex Trujillo (PR)
19. Leavander Johnson (USA)
19. Miguel Callist (PAN)
20. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
21. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
22. Miguel Callist (PAN)
23. Steve Quinonez (USA)
24. Julian Wheeler (USA)
25. Sayan Sanchat (RUS)
26. Steve Forbes (USA)
27. Michael Clark (USA)
28. Juan Carlos Diaz (SPA)
29. Efren Hinojosa (MEX)
30. Laszlo Herczeg (HUN)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
1. Jesus Chavez (USA)
2. Philip Ndou (SA)
3. Randy Suico (PHIL)
4. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
5. Mzonke Fana (SA)
6. Daniel Attah (NIG)
7. Affif Djelti (FRA)
8. Nate Campbell (USA)
9. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
10. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
11. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
12. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
13. Ryuhei Sugita (JAP)
14. Kevin Kelley (USA)
15. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
16. Orlando Salido (MEX)
17. Jorge Paez (MEX)
18. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
19. Yongsoo Choi (KOR)
20. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
21. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
22. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
23. Mike Anchondo (USA)
24. Silverio Ortiz (MEX)
25. Daniel Alicea (PR)
26. Humberto Soto (MEX)
27. Alex Arthur (GB)
28. Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)
29. Lamar Murphy (USA)
30. Bobby Pacquiao(PHIL)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Michael Brodie (GB)
3. Naseem Hamed (GB)
4. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
5. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
6. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
7. William Abelyan (USA)
8. Guty Espadas (MEX)
9. Luis Fuentes (MEX)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Takalani Noluvo (SA)
12. Zahir Raheem (USA)
13. Rocky Juarez (USA)
14. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
15. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
16. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
17. Juan Gerardo Cabrera (ARG)
18. Oscar Leon (COL)
19. David Murillo (MEX)
20. Yangsoo Sung (KOR)
21. Angel Chacon (PR)
22. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
23. George Priest Smalls (USA)
24. Frankie Toledo (USA)
25. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
26. Choi Tseveenpurev (MON)
27. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
28. Santiago Rojas (SPA)
29. Gavin Rees (GB)
30. Ruben Estanislao (MEX)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)
1. Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)
2. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
3. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
6. Willie Jorrin (USA)
7. Osamu Sato (JAP)
8. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
9. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
10. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
11. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
12. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
13. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
14. David Donis (USA)
15. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
16. Marcos Licona (MEX)
17. Jose Rojas (VEN)
18. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
19. Jilrex Laca (PHIL)
20. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
21. Youngjin Cho (KOR)
22. Bones Adams (USA)
23. Vincenzo Gigliotti (ITA)
24. Jaekwang Chung (KOR)
25. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
26. Michael Alldis (GB)
27. Wethya Singwangcha (THAI)
28. Yober Ortega (VEN)
29. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
30. Martin Honorio (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Diego Morales (MEX)
3. Genaro Garcia (USA)
4. Noel Wilders (GB)
5. Jess Maca (PHIL)
6. David Guerault (FRA)
7. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
8. Julio Zarate (MEX)
9. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
10. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
11. Tim Austin (USA)
12. Julio Gamboa (NIC)
13. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
14. Jesus Perez (COL)
15. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
16. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
17. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
18. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
19. Moises Castro (NIC)
20. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
21. Steve Molitor (CAN)
22. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
23. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
24. Eidy Moya (VEN)
25. Johnny Armour (GB)
26. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
27. Silence Mabuza (SA)
28. Nicky Booth (GB)
29. Johnny Lear (PHIL)
30. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
2. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
3. Luis Bolano (COL)
4. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
5. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
6. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
7. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
8. Jose Beranza (MEX)
9. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
10. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
11. Felix Machado (VEN)
12. Martin Castillo (MEX)
13. Jose Navarro (USA)
14. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
15. Masayuki Arinaga (JAP)
16. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
17. Shin Ogata (JAP)
18. Peter Culshaw (GB)
19. Karim Quibir (SPA)
20. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
21. Erick Lopez (MEX)
22. Valerio Sanchez (MEX)
23. Lunga Ntontela (SA)
24. Simphewe Khandisa (SA)
25. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
26. Waenpetch Chuwatana (THAI)
27. Neddy Garcia (USA)
28. Eduardo Pacheco (COL)
29. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
30. Rolando Gerongco (PHIL)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
3. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
4. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
5. Brian Viloria (USA)
6. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
7. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
8. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
9. Damaen Kelly (GB)
10. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
11. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
12. Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)
13. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
14. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
15. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
16. Koji Koyama (JAP)
17. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
18. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
19. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
20. Hayato Asai (JAP)
21. Yusuke Morishima (JAP)
22. Ramses Patterson (USA)
23. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
24. Jose Araiza (MEX)
25. Angel Priolo (COL)
26. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
27. Jason Booth (GB)
28. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
29. Ever Briseno (NIC)
30. Glenn Donaire (PHIL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)
1. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
2. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Yosam Choi (KOR)
4. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
5. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
6. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
7. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
8. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
9. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
10. Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
11. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
12. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
13. Monelisi Myekeni (SA)
14. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
15. Agustin Luna (MEX)
16. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
17. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
18. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
19. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
20. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
21. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
22. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
23. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
24. Juan Centeno (NIC)
25. Katsunari Takayama (JAP)
26. Rodrigo Garcia (MEX)
27. Steve Msimango (SA)
28. Jun Kitano (JAP)
29. Liborio Romero (MEX)
30. Samransak Singmanassuk (THAI)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Khulile Makeba (SA)
2. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
3. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
4. Eagle Okuda (JAP)
5. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
6. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
7. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
8. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
9. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
10. Juan Palacios (NIC)
11. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
12. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
13. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
14. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
15. Juan Alfonso Keb Baas (MEX)
16. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
17. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
18. Ki-Moon Na (KOR)
19. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
20. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
21. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
22. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
23. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
24. Ulises Solis (MEX)
25. Manasak Yoothhakit (THAI)
26. Omar Soto (MEX)
27. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
28. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
29. Ivan Calderon (PR)
30. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of March 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Fres Oquendo (USA)
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
6. John Ruiz (USA)
7. Evander Holyfield (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Mike Tyson (USA)
10. Lamon Brewster (USA)
11. Lou Savarese (USA)
12. Clifford Etienne (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
1. James Toney (USA)
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Virgil Hill (USA)
5. Kelvin Davis (USA)
6. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
7. Ezra Sellers (USA)
8. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
9. Ravea Springs (USA)
10. Dale Brown (CAN)
11. Krysztof Wlodarczyk (POL)
12. Jason Robinson (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Montell Griffin (USA)
4. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
5. Derrick Harmon (USA)
6. Eric Harding (USA)
7. Jorge Castro (ARG)
8. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
9. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
10. Clinton Woods (GB)
11. Stipe Drews (CRO)
12. George Jones (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Danilo Haussler (GER)
3. Byron Mitchell (USA)
4. Charles Brewer (USA)
5. Mads Larsen (DEN)
6. Markus Beyer (GER)
7. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
8. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
9. Andre Thysse (SA)
10. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
11. Glenn Catley (GB)
12. David Starie (GB)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Carl Daniels (USA)
4. Raymond Joval (HOL)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. Erland Betare (FRA)
7. Bert Schenk (GER)
8. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
9. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
10. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
11. Bea Diallo (LIB)
12. Evans Ashira (GUY)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. J.C. Candelo (USA)
4. Alex Bunema (USA)
5. Shane Mosley (USA)
6. Emmett Linton (USA)
7. Bronco McKart (USA)
8. Angel Hernandez (USA)
9. Kassim Ouma (USA)
10. Travis Simms (USA)
11. Andrei Pestriaev (RUS)
12. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
1. Cory Spinks (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. Vernon Forrest (USA)
5. James Hare (ENG)
6. Rafael Pineda (COL)
7. Jose Rivera (USA)
8. Jose Celaya (USA)
9. Antonio Diaz (MEX)
10. Michele Trabant (GER)
11. Kermit Cintron (USA)
12. Christian Bladt (DEN)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Arturo Gatti (USA)
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
4. Zab Judah (USA)
5. Omar Weis (ARG)
6. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
7. Micky Ward (USA)
8. Emanuel Augustus (USA)
9. Ben Tackie (GHA)
10. James Leija (USA)
11. Miguel Cotto (USA)
12. Carlos Vilches (ARG)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Paul Spadafora (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Leavander Johnson (USA)
3. Angel Manfredy (USA)
4. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
5. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
6. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
7. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
8. Juan Lazcano (USA)
9. Steve Johnston (USA)
10. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
11. Julio Diaz (USA)
12. Lamar Murphy (USA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)
1. Steve Forbes
2. Vacant
3. Joel Casamayor (USA)
4. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
5. Jesus Chavez (USA)
6. David Santos (USA)
7. Nate Campbell (USA)
8. Orlando Salido (MEX)
9. Phillip Ndou (SA)
10. Daniel Attah (USA)
11. Daniel Alicea (USA)
12. Kevin Kelley (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Oscar Leon (PR)
4. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
5. Michael Brodie (ENG)
6. William Abelyan (USA)
7. Manuel Medina (MEX)
8. In Jin Chi (KOR)
9. Frankie Toledo (USA)
10. Victor Polo (COL)
11. Guty Espadas (USA)
12. Paulie Ayala (USA)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
5. Fernando Velardez (USA)
6. Diego Morales (MEX)
7. Jorge Eliecer Julio (COL)
8. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
9. F. Rakkiatgym (THAI)
10. David Donis (USA)
11. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
12. Walter Estrada (COL)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Tim Austin (USA)
3. Pete Frissina (USA)
4. Jesus Perez (COL)
5. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
6. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
7. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
8. David Guerault (FRA)
9. Adan Vargas (MEX)
10. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
11. Jose Aguiniga (USA)
12. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Felix Machado (VEN)
4. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
5. Martin Castillo (MEX)
6. Luis Bolano (COL)
7. Vernie Torres (USA)
8. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
9. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
10. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
11. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
12. In Joo Cho (KOR)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
4. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
5. Damaen Kelly (GB)
6. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
7. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
8. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
9. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
10. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
11. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
12. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
5. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
6. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
7. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
8. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
9. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
10. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
11. Juan Keb Baas (MEX)
12. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Miguel Barrera (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
5. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
6. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
7. Ivan Calderon (PR)
8. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
9. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
10. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
11. Sarikalrk Ekarin (THAI)
12. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, October 1973

MONZON IS ALIVE AND WELL IN ARGENTINA, *Talks Retirement*

By Mario A. Gru

Like other South American and Central American countries, Argentina welcomed professional boxing rather late. It did not get much notice fistically until Luis Angel Firpo invaded the United States and, unfortunately, was knocked out by Jack Dempsey in 1923.

However, despite the comparative youth of Argentinean boxing, it has had some great fighters. Maybe the best of them all is Carlos Monzon, the current middleweight champion of the world.

The big question about Monzon no longer is "How good is he?" but "How much longer is he going to remain in the ring?" He talks a lot about quitting. He plans to fight again with France's Jean-Claude Bouttier, whom he stopped in 12 rounds in Paris on June 17, 1972.

New York, Buenos Aires, London, Sydney, and Los Angeles would pay high to see Monzon defend his title against Tony Mundine, of Australia. But Carlos says he has no intention of meeting the Aussie.

Monzon plans to retire at the end of 1973 and he is intent on quitting the ring as champion of the world at 160 pounds.

Only recently, Monzon flew to New York

Monzon collected more than his share of hardware throughout his career. He thought about retirement at the end of 1973, after sharing THE RING's Fighter of the Year honors with Muhammad Ali in '72.

and received the Boxing Writers of America Association Fighter of the Year award. He already had received a similar citation from THE RING magazine.

Monzon, 30, married and father of two children, is a man of powerful build. Even though he is not a Rock Hudson type, women fall for him. He is devoted to his own. He is likeable, somehow shy. His inner personality was well expressed by somebody who knows him pretty well—discoverer, father-pal, trainer Amilcar Brusa.

Asked about his pupil, Brusa replied: "I consider Carlos Monzon an undemonstrative man, whose personality shows seldom. He is a good guy, a good friend of his friends and especially of the ones who gave him a hand when in need. He is not a man to express his feelings easily. You have to know him intimately to guess them. Most of the people who meet him think they know him, but that's not so. And if this happens a few days before a fight, he looks sullen, clammy, saying only a few words from time to time. He's nervous when people not from his inner circle are around him. But it is understandable, and people should realize the nervous state he is in.

"To support my words, you should have seen him last March in Venezuela, where he traveled with me, manager Tito Lectoure, and a group of boxing writers of Argentina, to be present at the fight of Argentine Nicolino Locche against world champion Antonio 'Kid Pambele' Cervantes. He was then a different man—friendly, amiable with everybody, throwing jokes here and there, and laughing at funny ones said by the others. In a few simple words, he's a very likeable guy.

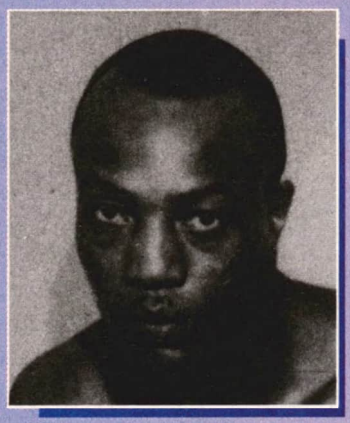
"And he is not walking on clouds because of his present situation. Everyone knows very well, especially the boxing game people, that this is something very difficult to avoid when world fame flirts with a boxer. Many others in his outstanding position have gone wrong in that direction."

Very sound words, and no doubt, Brusa knows him thoroughly.

The world champion of the middleweights started his career in 1959 as an amateur, and turned professional in 1963. His debut in the big league dates from 1966. As an amateur he had 87 fights. As a professional he has had 95.

He is considered by some, his manager among them, as a technical boxer, even though he's unorthodox because of his personal way of acting in the ring. But some experts have said he doesn't move his legs

THE RING RATINGS, October 1973



Bob Foster

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: George Foreman, Hayward, CA
1. **Joe Frazier,** Philadelphia, PA
2. **Ken Norton,** San Diego, CA
3. **Muhammad Ali,** Cherry Hill, NJ
4. **Jerry Quarry,** Los Angeles, CA
5. **Earnie Shavers,** Warren, OH
6. **Ron Lyle,** Denver, CO
7. **Jimmy Ellis,** Louisville, KY
8. **Ernie Terrell,** Chicago, IL
9. **Jose Roman,** Puerto Rico
10. **Chuck Wepner,** Bayonne, NJ

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Bob Foster, Washington, D.C.
1. **Pierre Fourie,** South Africa
2. **John Conteh,** England
3. **Len Hutchins,** Detroit, MI
4. **Victor Galindez,** Argentina
5. **Don Fullmer,** West Jordan, UT
6. **Andy Kendall,** Portland, OR
7. **Jimmy Dupree,** Jersey City, NJ
8. **Chris Finnegan,** England
9. **Tom Bogs,** Denmark
10. **Maxie Smith,** England

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos Monzon, Argentina
1. **Tony Mundine,** Australia
2. **Jean-Claude Bouttier,** France
3. **Emile Griffith,** New York, NY
4. **Bennie Briscoe,** Philadelphia, PA
5. **Miguel De Oliviera,** Brazil
6. **Rodrigo Valdez,** Colombia
7. **Bunny Sterling,** England
8. **Koichi Wajima,** Japan
9. **Charkey Ramon,** Australia
10. **Tony Licata,** New Orleans, LA

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jose Napoles, Mexico
1. **Hedgemon Lewis,** Detroit, MI
2. **Clyde Gray,** Canada
3. **Angel Espada,** Puerto Rico
4. **Roger Menetrey,** France
5. **Eddie Perkins,** Chicago, IL
6. **Jack Tillman,** Mobile, AL.
7. **Ronnie Harris,** Detroit, MI
8. **Billy Backus,** Syracuse, NY
9. **John Stracey,** England
10. **Fausto Rodriguez,** Dominican Republic

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Antonio Cervantes, Colombia
1. **Bruno Arcari,** Italy
2. **Carlos Gimenez,** Argentina
3. **Alfonso Frazer,** Panama
4. **Roger Zami,** France
5. **Tony Ortiz,** Spain
6. **Victor Ortiz,** Puerto Rico
7. **Turk Kamaci,** Turkey
8. **Piero Ceru,** Italy
9. **Mario Guilloti,** Argentina
10. **Hector Thompson,** Australia

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Roberto Duran, Panama
1. **Esteban DeJesus,** Puerto Rico
2. **Ken Buchanan,** Scotland
3. **Jimmy Heair,** Los Angeles, CA
4. **Ray Lampkin,** Portland, OR
5. **Rodolfo Gonzalez,** Long Beach, CA
6. **Ould Makloufi,** France
7. **Hugo Gutierrez,** Argentina
8. **Antonio Puddu,** Italy
9. **Chango Carmona,** Mexico
10. **Andries Steyn,** South Africa

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Kuniaka Shibata, Japan
1. **Sammy Goss,** Trenton, NJ
2. **Frankie Otero,** Miami, FL
3. **Love Allotey,** Ghana
4. **Victor Echegaray,** Argentina
5. **Lothar Abend,** Germany
6. **Ben Villaflor,** Philippines
7. **Ricardo Arredondo,** Mexico
8. **Alfredo Marcano,** Venezuela
9. **Miguel Riasco,** Panama
10. **Walter Seeley,** Sayville, NY

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Eder Jofre,** Brazil
2. **Bert Nabalatan,** Philippines
3. **Danny Lopez,** Los Angeles, CA
4. **Ruben Olivares,** Mexico
5. **Ernesto Marcel,** Panama
6. **Bobby Chacon,** Los Angeles, CA
7. **Jose Legra,** Spain
8. **Arnold Taylor,** South Africa
9. **Antonio (Gitano) Jimenez,** Spain
10. **Rigoberto Riasco,** Panama

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Romeo Anaya, Mexico
1. **Rafael Herrera,** Mexico
2. **Jose Casas,** Argentina
3. **Johnny Clark,** England
4. **Enrique Pinder,** Panama
5. **Rodolfo Martinez,** Mexico
6. **Paul Ferreri,** Australia
7. **Benicio Sosa,** Argentina
8. **Dave Needham,** England
9. **Chucho Castillo,** Mexico
10. **Paddy Maguire,** Ireland

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Venice Borkorsor, Thailand
1. **Chartchai Chionoi,** Thailand
2. **Miguel Canto,** Mexico
3. **Betulio Gonzalez,** Venezuela
4. **Henry Nissen,** Australia
5. **Erbito Salvarria,** Philippines
6. **Fritz Chervet,** Switzerland
7. **Tony Moreno,** San Antonio, TX
8. **Costenito Morales,** Mexico
9. **Susumu Hanagata,** Japan
10. **Vicente Pool,** Mexico

right, and lacks good arm and leg coordination.

About such remarks, Brusa argues: "How can a fighter with all these shortcomings keep his face unmarked, with not a single fall during his career? Above all, how can it be that all his rivals, many with powerful punches and quite clever, couldn't beat him, with so many fights since he got the crown?

"The answer is that Carlos Monzon is a different kind of technician with a strong punch, plus a very personal way of boxing. We saw him, during his light trainings, tear away a punching bag from its hinges."

Monzon said he considers as his best fight the first one with Emile Griffith. His best rival, Jean-Claude Bouttier.

"The American Bennie Briscoe," said Monzon, "was the toughest I'd ever run into in my whole career. It was like fight-

ing against a Sherman Tank. But I won, didn't I?"

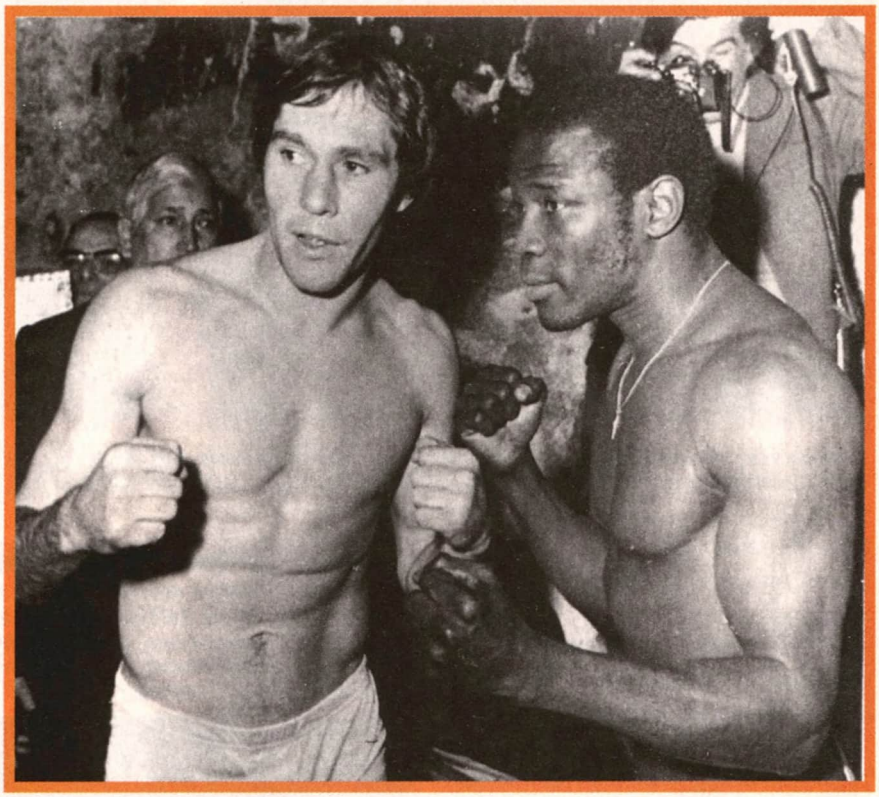
In reference to his techniques in fighting, he said he never uses a routine offensive. He is not always the same Carlos Monzon. He plans according to the techniques used by his opponents.

To widen our technical analysis of Monzon, we talked with retired undefeated world flyweight title claimant Horacio Accavallo. He sees Carlos this way: "In my opinion, Carlos can't be called really a technical fighter. He hasn't enough strength to resist a long match, and he assimilates continuous punching very little. But, even with these shortcomings, he is the top man of his category because there are only a few boxers lined up for world championship challenge and none can beat him. The only one—but I don't think he could really—might be Jose Napoles."

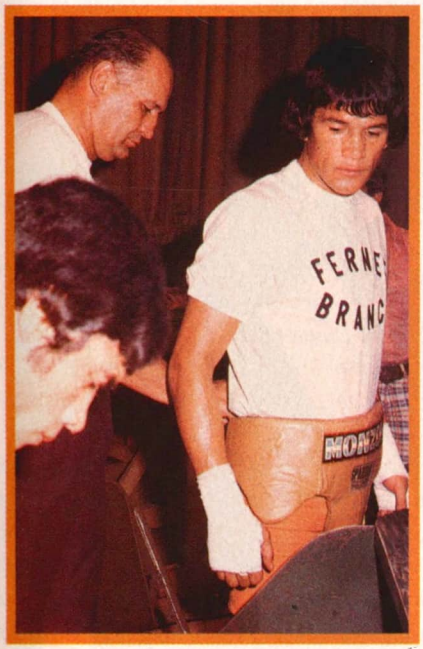
For Accavallo, Emile Griffith is not a true rival of Monzon. As he said, Monzon showed him he is the better man by defeating him twice. Why does he consent to fight already defeated rivals?

"Well," said Accavallo, "at this stage of his career, Monzon is preparing a mint for himself. He accepts fights for the title every three, four, or five months, and by doing them he earns a good payday each time. The career of a boxer lasts a short time, and each one who gets to the top, as he did, has to see to fill his pockets so the money will last for the rainy days that come afterward."

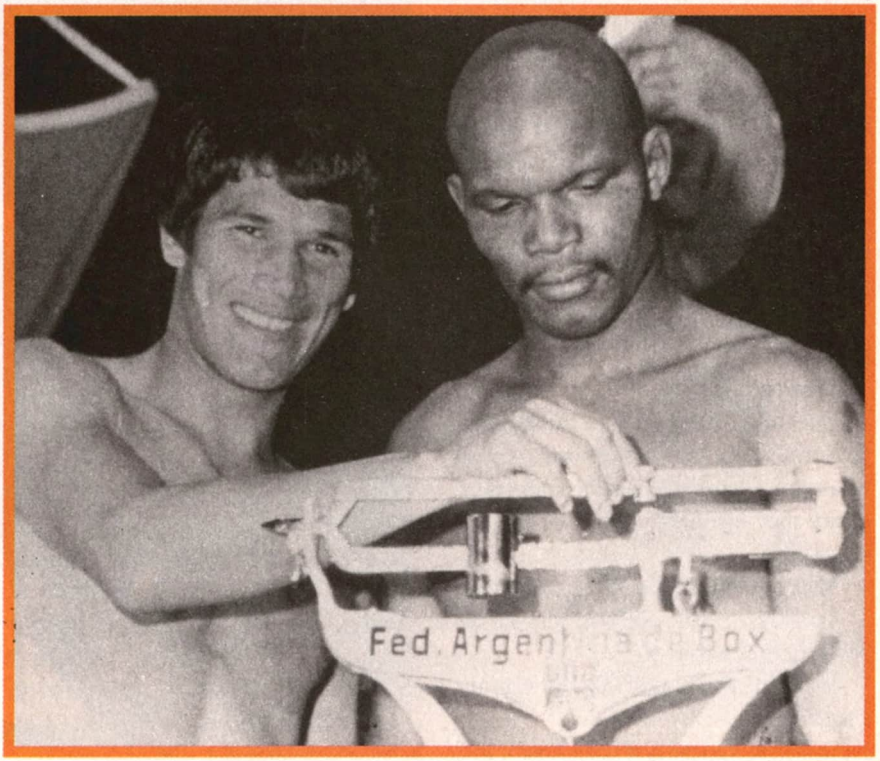
After training, Monzon's body glistens with sweat, his hair is tousled, there's a towel over his shoulders. The champ and a reporter sit carelessly on a table in a corner of the gym. A photographer is busy around

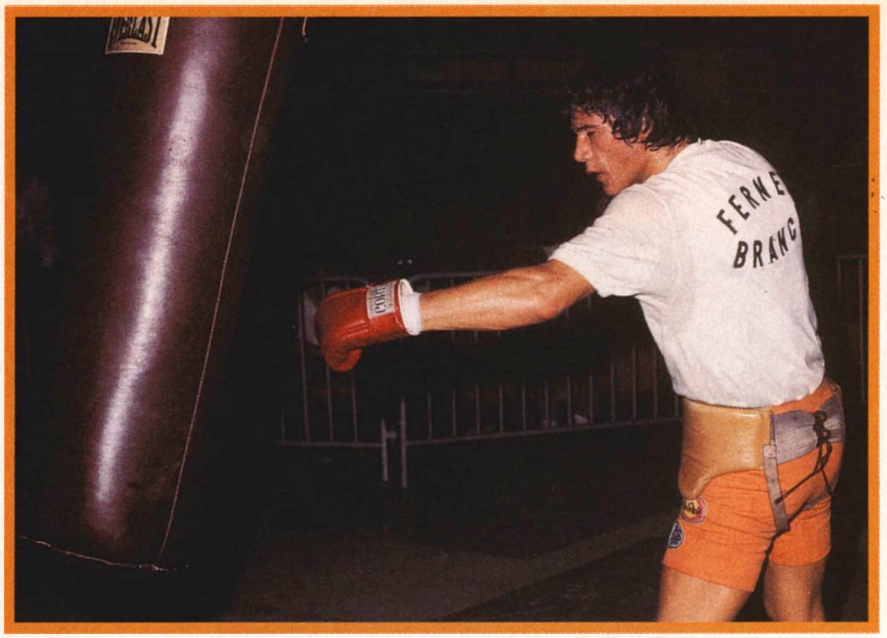


Monzon opponents Jean-Claude Bouttier and Emile Griffith pose prior to their December 1972 bout in Paris (above). Monzon considered Bouttier his best rival and thought he gave his own best performance in his June '72 win over Griffith. He called Bennie Briscoe, pictured at the weigh-in for his November '72 title bout with Monzon in Buenos Aires (below), the toughest opponent he'd ever faced.



Monzon's trainer Amilcar Brusa, lacing on Monzon's protective cup, said his prized pupil was an "undemonstrative man, whose personality shows seldom. He is not a man to express his feelings easily. You have to know him intimately to guess them."





Monzon always trained hard, but used different tactics for different opponents. This adaptability was one of the things that made Monzon so special and allowed him to beat such a wide variety of foes.

them. The sounds of a gym provide a background for a direct-to-the-point question and answer session:

Question: Do you feel that the world championship opened up wider perspectives for your life?

Monzon: Of course, it was my opportunity to reach all I wanted in life through my ring career. It also afforded me the seldom given chance to be in other life levels, far away from my own limited poor start, meeting many outstanding persons.

Question: As an idol of crowds and therefore a public figure, do you engage yourself in social work such as Brazilian soccer star Pele and world car racing champion Emerson Fittipaldi do in their country?

Monzon: I don't like to be in the public's eye that way, but I believe I'm doing things for the people of my country.

Question: Would you teach boxing to newcomers?

Monzon: No.

Question: What do you think about your rivals? Are they professionals against whom you oppose your boxing knowledge, or are they enemies whom you have to knock out?

Monzon: My enemies of the moment.

Question: In your opinion, who are the best boxers of today?

Monzon: Emile Griffith and Cassius Clay.

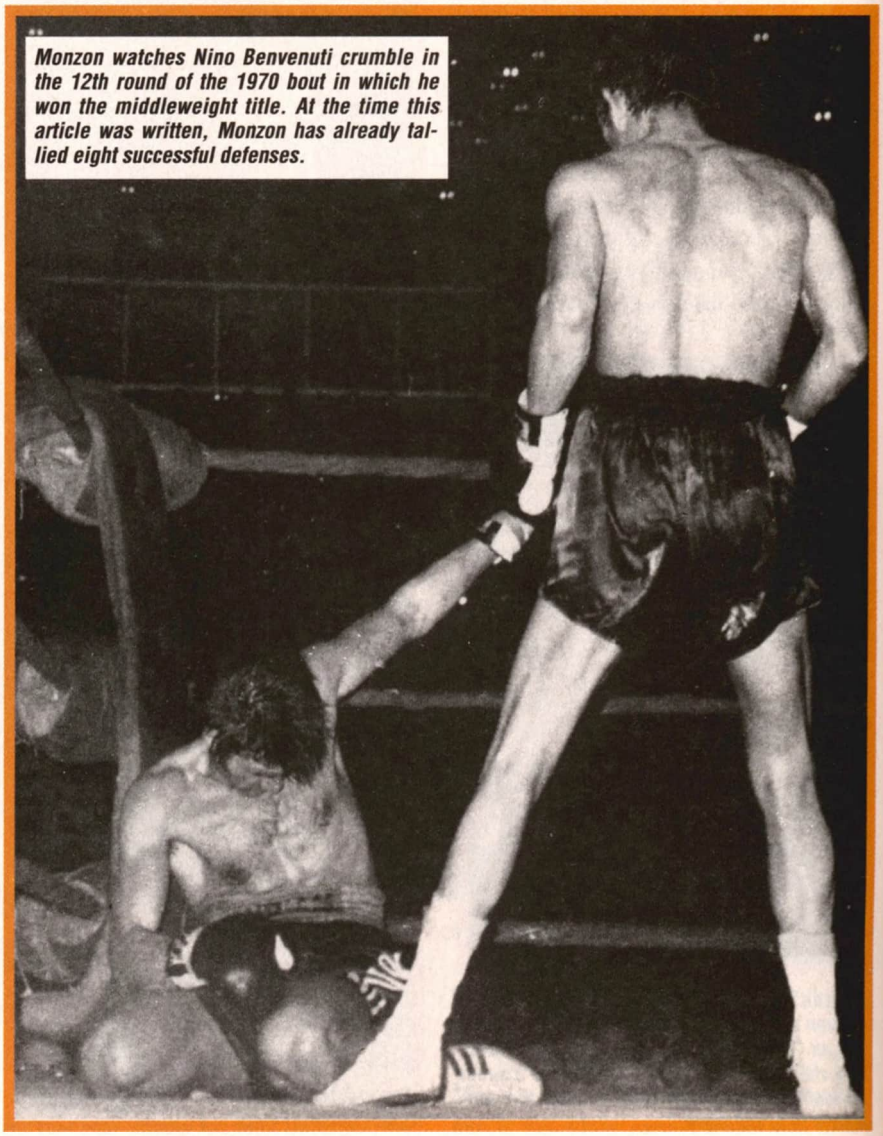
Question: And the best Latin Americans?

Monzon: Rodrigo Valdez, Eder Jofre, and Victor Echegaray.

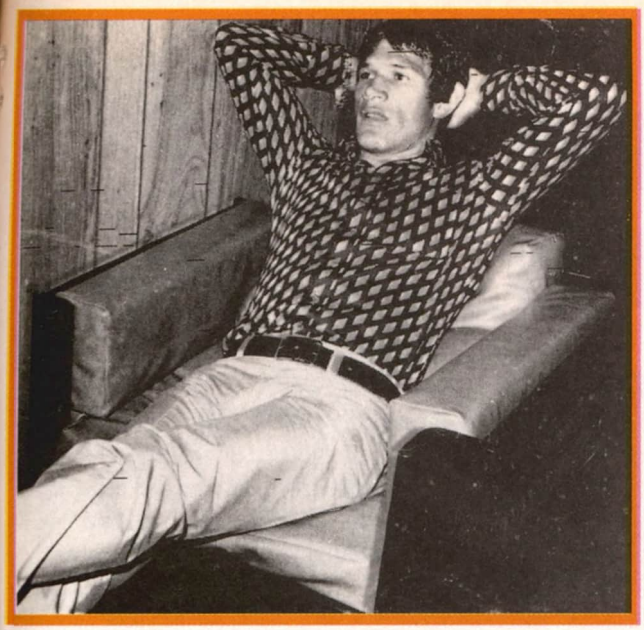
Monzon's manager/promoter Lectoure gave these comments:

"Carlos Monzon, as world champion of the middleweights, is the mirror that the Argentines who like to see or practice sports look at. He is the example of what a champion should be, a sportsman who takes care of himself. Look at him. Everybody in sport should act like him. He doesn't take rivals for granted and prepares himself thoroughly before each fight. Trainers and managers come to him for advice. He got where he is because he is a dedicated boxer and listens to advice.

"I wouldn't know what his rivals think of Monzon, because I'm not one of his rivals, but I wouldn't be wrong in guessing what his rivals would think when they confront him. They would be careful to be as



Monzon watches Nino Benvenuti crumble in the 12th round of the 1970 bout in which he won the middleweight title. At the time this article was written, Monzon has already tallied eight successful defenses.



As '73 was winding down, a relaxed Monzon was weighing his options. Would he continue his career or hang up his gloves? Either way, "His future is completely assured," said promoter Tito Lectoure.

far away as possible from punching distance because they know Monzon is a guy who won't let go till the finish.

"What I do know is what we think of him. I consider myself a friend of Carlos Monzon and a close collaborator of his since his early professional days. I do not consider myself only as his manager, but something more. I see him as a man who drew himself a line of action in life, following it straight with hard work and seriousness, somebody who knows how to remain steadily on course.

"About his plans of retirement, it's up to Carlos. As you know, I come from a line of people who'd been in this game for a long time. All my life rotated around boxing and sports. I have seen many boxing stars, so I can outline an opinion on Monzon and his plans of retiring.

"I think our champion can go on not only for this year, but for many to come. His boxing condition, his age, his hard-working seriousness, open for him a long road. But, if he wants to retire, it is up to him to decide. Even considering my impresario status, in this special case, I'd let him and his family decide what he's going to do with himself next.

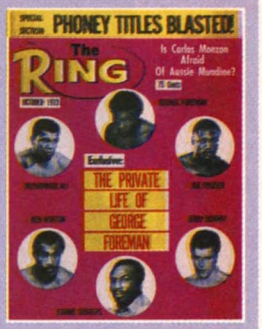
"His future is completely assured. His investments have been sound: apartment buildings, houses, some thousand acres of land, mortgages, and savings in national and foreign banks.

"Monzon must be one of the few exceptions among boxers who follows sound expert advice, and has the innate intelligence to see what happened to others in his profession. Something very difficult to forecast when you're on top, because each one thought, *I'm a wiser guy. Nothing like that is going to happen to me!* The road of life is paved with the wise men who learned sad lessons.

"Carlos Monzon doesn't plan far ahead. He likes to evaluate first what happened with the most recent fight, and then look after the new proposals. There are, of course, several pending. And all in all, his present possibilities are those of a long standing world champion." ■

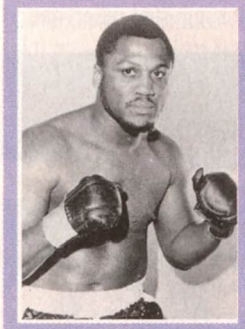
THE RING, October 1973

***The Cover*:** The world knew George Foreman as the man who surprisingly flung Joe Frazier around like a rag doll to win the heavyweight title. THE RING took a deeper look at this brooding, menacing figure that made opponents cower. During the interview, Foreman displayed a sly sense of humor and his strong sense of loyalty to the United States.



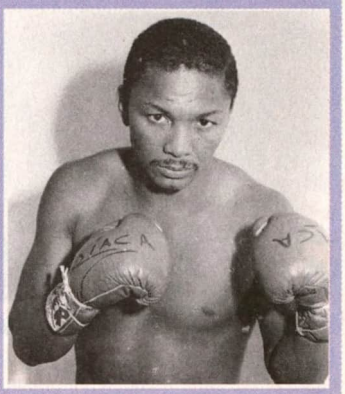
***Alphabet Soup*:** The WBC and WBA were making it hard in the early-'70s for boxing fans to understand who the real world champions were. The alphabet groups had created rampant confusion with multiple titleholders, phony champions, spurious title claimants, and the stripping of titleholders, such as Ismael Laguna (pictured), on a political basis.

***New York Shut Out*:** Madison Square Garden boss Teddy Brenner (pictured) was not smiling in 1973. Brenner encountered a number of mishaps trying to get two marketable heavyweights in the ring together at MSG. New heavyweight king George Foreman wasn't too enthusiastic about fighting in "The Mecca Of Boxing," either.



***Frazier Comeback*:** Joe Frazier began to fight his way back into heavyweight title contention with a trip to England, where he faced Joe Bugner. Frazier worked at a brisk pace and Bugner was not able to keep up. Even so, Bugner put on a surprisingly strong display, and the fight was close until Frazier dropped his foe in the 10th round.

***Fighter Of The Month*:** Esteban DeJesus earned Fighter of the Month honors for the second time in a six-month span by beating Ray Lampkin via 12-round decision. DeJesus was counting on a rematch with world lightweight champion Roberto Duran, whom he had decisioned in a non-title bout the previous year.



COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

A MATTER OF CLASS

When it comes to boxing skills, Roy Jones is utterly dazzling, a rare virtuoso who's simply astonishing. Unfortunately, his sense of sportsmanship is inversely proportioned to his skills as a boxer. While defeating the much bigger but far less accomplished John Ruiz, he mocked and belittled his huge foe—as indeed he's done to so many others less-gifted men he's fought. In short, as a boxer-athlete, Roy Jones is in a class by himself, but as a sportsman, class is the very essence he lacks.

PATRICK TEE
Montreal, Quebec

STILL NOT SOLD

I think Roy Jones is overrated. His last three fights have been against weak opposition. Glen Kelly was slow and clumsy, as was Clinton Woods. The same goes for John Ruiz, who was only a paper champion. If Jones made history in the Ruiz fight, he did it against a bum. Call Jones the best fighter in the world if you want. But he still hasn't proven it to me.

BOBBY DAVIS
Goldonna, LA

BEWILDERING GEORGE

After the shocking defeat of Wladimir Klitschko at the hands of Corrie Sanders, I remained puzzled and confused. But the knockout victory was not the only thing that left me bewildered. During the broadcast, Jim Lampley made a statement referring to the fact that Wladimir Klitschko had been number one in THE RING magazine's ratings for more than a year, unaffected by politics. But George Foreman suggested otherwise. His outlandish comment, "You'd be surprised of how affected everybody is by politics," left even Larry Merchant confused. "I don't know what you're referring to, George," Merchant replied.

I'm curious, has George been sucking on one of them mufflers or has he been hit in the head too many times over the years? This man has some serious issues, and I wish HBO would just get rid of him. The man seems like an irate, biased, confusing idiot with no real clue to the statements he makes. The man just speaks off the top of his head with no real sense to whatever he's saying.

Whatever his case, please cancel Foreman's subscription. The man must have forgotten how highly you guys placed him in those same rankings in the past.

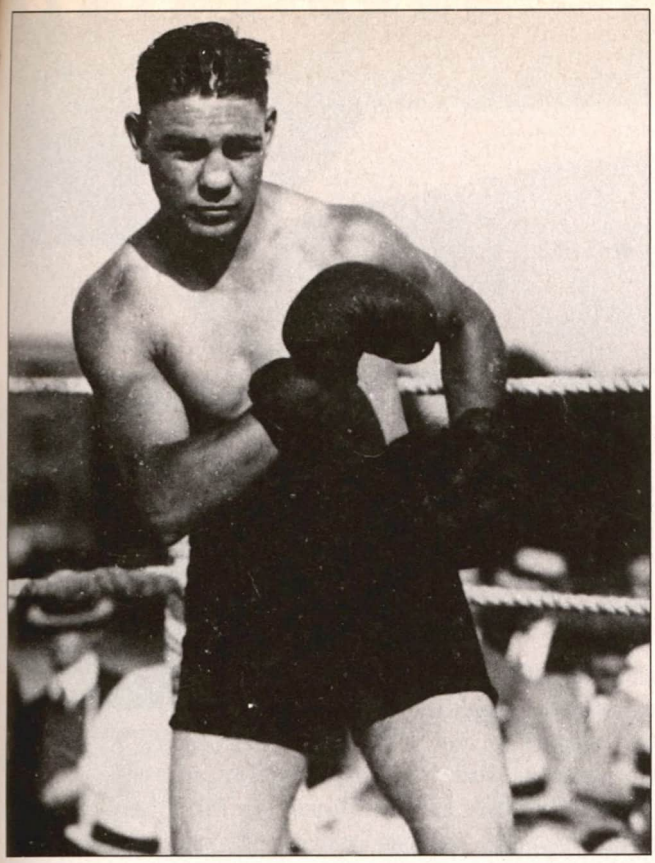
TONY PETRISCH
Vestal, NY

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Not everybody is a Roy Jones fan. Readers Patrick Tee and Bobby Davis both take shots at the light heavyweight champion (pictured beating heavyweight John Ruiz). One finds fault with his accomplishments, and the other with his personality.

GREB-ROSENBLOOM REVISITED

I was disappointed with the article on Maxie Rosenbloom ("Marlon Brando Coulda Been A Cuntenda … Maxie Rosenbloom Was A Champ") in the May 2003 issue of THE RING EXTRA, wherein writer



Several readers, including Ed Cahill, wrote to set the record straight regarding the 1925 no-decision bout between Hall of Famers Harry Greb (pictured) and Maxie Rosenbloom in Cleveland. All three Cleveland newspapers agreed that Greb dominated the fight.

Tommy Deas gives a completely erroneous account of Rosenbloom's 1925 Cleveland encounter with Harry Greb. There were three newspapers serving Cleveland in those days, and all three make it clear that Greb basically won the fight as he pleased.

ED CAHILL
New York, NY

[Editor's Note: While Rosenbloom claimed during a 1970 interview published in **Score** *magazine that he got a "newspaper decision," in the Greb bout, Mr. Cahill is quite correct in stating that all three Cleveland papers reported that Greb easily beat Rosenbloom. In fact, Joe Williams of the* **Cleveland Press** *went so far as to suggest that Greb carried Rosenbloom: "It required artistry of a high caliber to keep Young Maxie in a vertical position ... It seems that Greb, in addition to being an artist in his line, is also a splendid humanitarian." Officially, the result was a 10-round no-decision.]*

BRAVO, BARRERA!

Thanks to THE RING for recognizing a true potential Hall of Fame boxer by putting Marco Antonio Barrera on the cover of the March 2003 issue. I could go on and on about undeserving Hall of Famers, but won't. Barrera, however, has proven himself time and again during his career and has the potential to do even more before he's through.

WISE E. GARDNER II
Norfolk, VA

NO BIG SURPRISE

The recent annihilation of number-one heavyweight contender Wladimir Klitschko by Corrie Sanders clearly demonstrates how the public and media can go overboard on unproven fighters. I felt this matchup was a disaster waiting to happen because neither of the Klitschko brothers had faced a heavy puncher prior to Wladimir folding against Sanders.

RAYMOND TODD
Vancouver, British Columbia

BYRD BOOSTER

It surprises me that boxing experts don't include Chris Byrd on their pound-for-pound lists. Almost every time he gets in the ring, he is faced with a considerable size disadvantage. With the exception of Roy Jones, that's a challenge that the rest of the top fighters aren't faced with.

One always hears the argument that Byrd doesn't hit hard, but he's got enough pop to earn the respect of any heavyweight on the scene. If he didn't, Evander Holyfield and David Tua, who have two of the best heavyweight chins, would've walked him down. Though Byrd was elusive against Tua, he absorbed some heavy powershots with relative ease, so we know he can take a punch. While out-gunned and seriously hurt by Wladimir Klitschko, Byrd made his bones as a tough guy by going the distance.

As a little guy in an era of super heavyweights, Byrd is among the most successful in the division. In my opinion, it isn't fair to say that Ricardo Mayorga, Vernon Forrest, Kostya Tszyu, and some of the others are better fighters than Chris Byrd.

DOVEED LINDER
St. Louis, MO

LOCCHE LOGIC

I take exception with William Dettloff's comment in the June 2003 issue of THE RING in the article titled "Kostya Tszyu vs. The All-Time Greats." Mr. Dettloff wrote that Nicolino Locche fought "a lot of guys you've never heard of." The fact is that Locche fought 10 world titleholders, including Joe Brown (W 10), Antonio Cervantes (W 15), Eddie Perkins (W 10), Paul Fiji (KO 10), Carlos Hernandez (W 15), Sandro Lopopolo (W 10), Ismael Laguna (D 10), and Carlos Ortiz (D 10). I don't argue with Mr. Dettloff as to whether Locche could or could not have beaten Tszyu, but let's be fair to Locche. Nobody can say that Ortiz, Brown, Cervantes, and Laguna were nobodies.

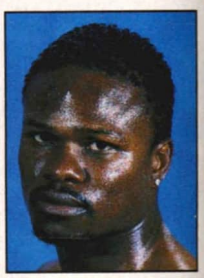
CARLOS IRUSTA
Buenos Aires, Argentina ■

Argentine boxing writer and occasional RING contributor Carlos Irusta fired off a letter in defense of Nicolino Locche (pictured) after reading the article about all-time junior welterweight greats in the June issue. Irusta points out that his countryman fought many outstanding fighters.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

FORREST FIRED UP FOR MAYORGA REMATCH


Mayorga-Forrest II: Will Vernon get revenge?

When **Shane Mosley** lost his undefeated record and the welterweight title to **Vernon Forrest** in January '02, he insisted on an immediate rematch, got one in July, and doubled his loss total as a result. Now Forrest finds himself in a similar situation. He lost his undefeated record and the welterweight title to **Ricardo Mayorga** in January '03, and he's now headed for an immediate rematch on July 12. Will history repeat itself, or will Forrest prove that Mayorga just "got lucky" the last time?

"The only comparison between Shane and myself is that we both looked for an immediate rematch," Forrest said in early-April, as his co-manager **Al Hayman** was working out the final details for the HBO-televised bout. "Otherwise, the situation is completely different here. It wasn't a situation where I was outclassed by a more skilled guy. I just fought stupid; I didn't fight the way I trained to. And I know exactly what I have to do to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Although he was blasted out in the third round by a flush right hand from the hard-hitting, intimidating, seemingly unbreakable Mayorga, this is not a petrified Forrest we're looking at here. The former champ's confidence seems unaffected, perhaps partially because he hasn't subjected himself to any images of himself on the canvas with Mayorga standing over him.

"I haven't watched the tape once. I don't have a copy," Forrest said. "I've played it in my mind a lot, though. I had many, many sleepless nights. I was angry at myself for a while. But not anymore. I accepted what happened, then I moved on. I've had a chance to reflect, analyze the situation, and put it in perspective. This was a guy that I really, truly disliked, and it got me out of my game plan. But I've learned from my mistakes.

"I need to take all the emotion out. I've always been able to take the emotion out. With Mosley, I concentrated on just skill and boxing. But with Mayorga, I put the emotions up front. I was prepared physically for the fight, but I wasn't properly prepared mentally. So I just have to mentally refocus, I'm going to have to be more selective in my punching, and I'm looking forward to winning and getting back to being the most dominant welterweight in the world."

It all sounds so easy. But just remember, a year ago Mosley was looking forward to the same thing.

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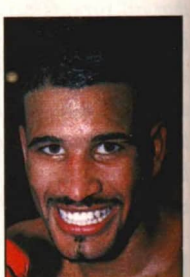
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It appears the HBO co-feature to Mayorga-Forrest II will be either the junior featherweight debut of former bantamweight king **Tim Austin**, or a bout involving junior welterweight **DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley**. HBO is interested in a grudge match between Corley and **Zab Judah** ... **Cory Spinks**, who was initially expected to be the summer opponent of Mayorga in a three-belt unification match, is instead looking to defend his strap in his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, on August 2. He may get the Mayorga-Forrest winner after that ... The rematch between Mosley and **Oscar De La Hoya** has finally been officially signed for September 13, on HBO Pay-Per-View. HBO would like to do a **Bernard Hopkins-Winky Wright** fight on September 20, which we can all safely assume would be shown in conjunction with a replay of De La Hoya-Mosley II ... In this column last issue, we mentioned that it looked like the co-feature to **Fernando Vargas-Fitz Vanderpool** on July 26 would be **Joel Casamayor-Juan Lazcano**, but there's been a change. With Lazcano possibly facing **Stevie Johnston** instead at some point in an eliminator for a shot at lightweight champ **Floyd Mayweather**, HBO is now looking at **Manny Pacquiao-Emmanuel Lucero** for the Vargas comeback show instead ... The next "Latin Fury" pay-per-view show will be a Puerto Rican extravaganza, probably on June 28 at an outdoor stadium on the island. Top Rank is planning a main event of **Eric Morel-Irene Pacheco** (for THE RING's vacant flyweight title), with **Daniel Santos** and **Miguel Cotto** both fighting on the undercard. ■

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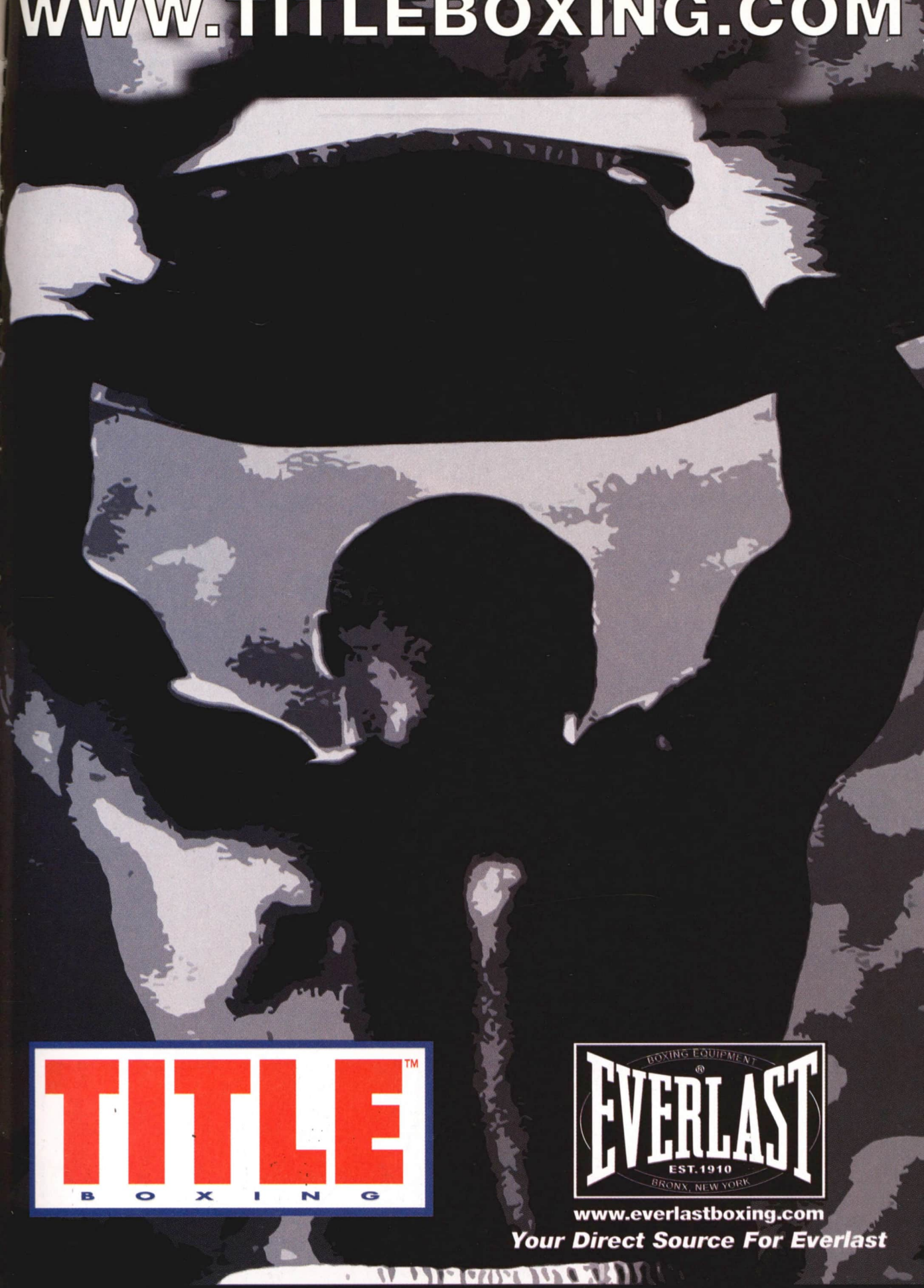

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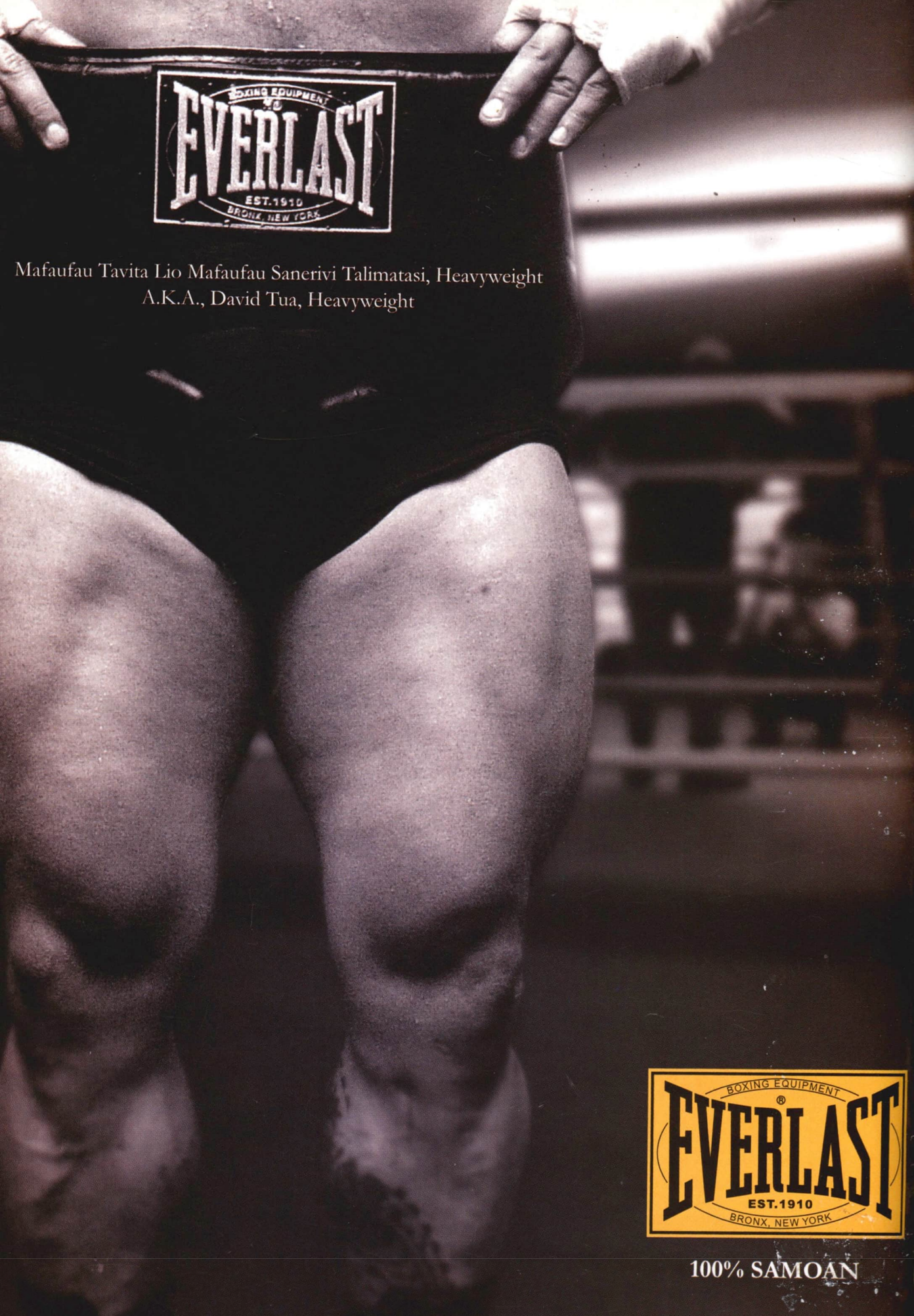

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A.K.A., David Tua, Heavyweight

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